

Syamsudin, M.Hum.



IDEAS OF  
**CULTURAL**  
REFORM

IN SINCLAIR LEWIS' *MAIN STREET*



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Syamsudin

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Praise always goes to Allah, God the Almighty, who has given all of His mercy so that this book is finally finished.

This book is trying to expose a part of the history of a nation which is now it is becoming the biggest nation in the world, the USA, reflected in one work of its' writer, Sinclair Lewis. As a matter of fact, talking about a history of a nation is always interesting. Moreover, it is the history of a big country like the USA. There are many things we could learn from the history. In this case, within the history we could learn all good achievements that human beings had ever made a long with their life history, or the reverse. All of those achievements will off course be useful for the next generation everywhere in term of providing knowledge of the past experience. So, they will be more prepared to face the age to come that would be more complicated in line with the age and nation's de-



velopment. Using a literary work as a source of history, this book is hoped to be able to enrich the discussion in the field of literature.

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## Chapter I

# INTRODUCTION

All aspects of human activities are greatly influenced by culture. Culture is best understood as being a matter of values that people use to give meaning and purpose to their lives and conventions that they employ to order their social interaction. Culture consequently includes the language that we speak, the way we organize our families, the way we dress, etc. In general, it is all things that we think, speak, do and produce.

It is learned, it is neither instinctive nor hereditary. Human culture is also infinitely diverse. People everywhere use language to communicate, live in a small domestic groups, have ideas about child rearing, cleanliness, manners, morality and so forth; but the concept of these conventions is immensely variable. Culture is essentially about order, providing the foundations for the complex work of relationships which human can create around themselves (Sims 14).



While Webster formulates some definition of culture as: (1) culture is the act of developing by education, discipline, social experience: the training or refining of the moral and intellectual faculties; (2) culture is the state of being cultivated; especially: the enlightenment and excellence of taste acquired by intellectual and aesthetic training, the intellectual and artistic content of civilization, refinement in manners, taste and thought; (3) Culture is the acquaintance with the taste in fine arts, humanities, and broad aspects of science as distinguished from vocational, technical, or professional skill or knowledge.; (4) culture is the total pattern of human behavior and its products embodied in thought, speech, action, and artifacts and dependent upon man's capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generation thought to use tools, language, and system of abstract thought; (5) Culture is body of customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits constituting a distinct complex of tradition a racial, religious, or social group about society in its knowledge, belief, words, law, custom, opinions, religion, superstition, and art (52).

From the definition above it could be concluded that culture is all aspects of human activities

in many sectors, such as in thought, speech, action, and artifacts. In addition, its development will depend on the man's capacity in learning and transmitting knowledge from generation to generation through the use of tools, language, and system of abstract thought.

In terms of reforms, Webster defines it as: (1) amendments of what is defective, vicious, corrupt, or depraved; (2) a removal or correction of an abuse; (3) Correction or improvement of what is faulty, defective, inefficient, or objectionable; (4) improvement in condition and moral behavior (1909).

From the quotation above it could be concluded that reform is the correction of what is wrong, defective, corrupt, and depraved. Thus, having ideas of cultural reforms means being able to correct or remove mistakes reflected in societies' lives that is pervasively done by the societies.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, America is one of the countries which experienced defects, abuses, corrupt and other social problems in line with the development of this country from the agricultural to the modern one. Shannon states that the central fact of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century American history was that the country changed from a predominantly agricultural soci-



ety to an industrial power. Most of the other developments of the period – an increase of national wealth, the rise of great cities and all of the consequences of their growth, the creation of a large class of wage earners, the huge increase in the human stream arriving in the new world from Europe, the change in the nature of politics, the beginning of an organized labor movement, the heightened class antagonism, the change views about society and government, to name only a few – flowed from the cultural fact of industrialization (4)

In the twenties it got more developed. In this era, there were a lot of progresses in many life sectors like the vast development in the technology of machinery, building construction, automotive, and other developments that were more physical than spiritual ones. In this case, despite material prosperity, the twenties also mark the beginning of a profound social and spiritual insecurity that has intensified as the century progressed. The principles development of the fascinating era brings a strenuous uncertainty to many aspects of American life. To many Americans it is the beginning of a cycle of stress, a testing period to determine whether the long cherished ideals of democracy, progress, and opportunity would continue as the

motivation forces in American life, or whether American destinies would be controlled by some new uncharacteristic system (Horton and Edward 303).

Leuchtenburg says that Industry has created a powerful economy and on the surface; signs of the material progress were apparent in the whole country. On the other hand, the decade also witnessed problems of labor, the decay of religion, a conflict between old and new values, and a war between urban and rural values (1-10). He further asserts that America in the twenties was also marked by revolution in morals. This was an era after the World War I in which attitudes and values revolutionary changed. Here women began to revolt masculine progressiveness, against over evaluation that women as love object, to being treated at the worst, as the species of poverty. The new women wanted the same freedom of movement that men had and the same economic and political rights (159).

Related to those defects, abuses, or corrupt happened in the midst of the societies from the nineteenth to the twenties in America, Sinclair Lewis is one of the American writers who has big concerns to the American development. In his no-



vel, *Main Street*, he criticized the attitude of small town people who, in this modern era, still show provincial mentality attitudes in their daily lives. Through his main character Carol, an educated woman coming from the city, Lewis tries to implement some reforms upon the villagers' attitudes. But, it is not easy for Carol to realize her ideas as the villagers still hold their belief firmly. However, she does not want to give up easily, although there are many hindrances she faces to realize her ideas she still tries hard to implement her reform ideas upon the villagers. Considering these facts, this book is trying to expose the provincial mentality attitudes demonstrated by the American villagers in one of the American small towns, Gopher Prairie and expose the ideas of cultural reform done by Carol around the twenties reflected in Lewis' *Main Street*. (\*)

## Chapter II

# SINCLAIR LEWIS AND HIS ACHIEVEMENTS

Harry Sinclair Lewis was born on February 7, 1885, in a raw little village on the Minnesota Prairies, called Sauk Center. He was the son of the two doctors in that town and had two older brothers. One of the brothers was to become a successful surgeon and the other was always something of a village lout. Both brothers, however, impressed the village more favorably than did young Harry, who was odd looking, badly coordinated, without any boyish skills, and a noisy show off. Nearly friendless, he had a wretched youth and hoped that everything would be better when he escaped the village for six months at Oberlin Academy, in Ohio, in preparation for Yale College.

At Yale, Lewis was even more outcast than he had been in Sauk Center, but by now he knew that he wanted to be a writer, had dropped his first name, and had made many contributions in



prose and verse to the college periodicals. Nevertheless, he fled the college at the beginning of his senior year. After a brief spell as a janitor at Upton Sinclair's experiment in communal living, called Helicon Hall in New Jersey, he tried to live by free-hand writing and nearly starved.

For two years, then, Lewis held journalistic jobs, and from 1910-1915 he worked in publishing houses in New York. In 1914, after the publication of his first novel *Our Mr. Wrenn*, he married Grace Megger, who worked for *Vogue Magazine*. They had one son, Wells Lewis, a brilliant boy who was killed in the World War II. With the sudden sale of a number of short stories to the *Saturday Evening Post* and other periodicals, Lewis was able to give up editorial work and began to live by his type-writer alone.

After the success of *Main Street*, his sixth novel, in 1920, the Lewis lived in many places in the United States and Europe, but for the novelist in these years, alcohol began to be a serious problem. His marriage ended early in 1928. In May 1928, he married an American journalist Dorothy Thompson, the best-known newspaper woman in Europe. They had one son, Michael, who became an actor. The marriage fell apart even more rapidly

than the first but was not legally ended until 1942. For a time Lewis occupied himself with theatrical activities, both as an unsuccessful dramatist and as a summer stock actor. Although he was now a wealthy man, his last years were a lonely, nervously wandering. He died alone in Rome on January 10, 1951. His ashes were returned to Sauk Center, from which, all his life, he had been fleeing.

Lewis' reputation rests on his five big novels, all of which continue to flourish in reprinted editions. They are notable for what seemed in the 1920's to be their bold and original Middle Class in the Middle West. Although their subjects vary strikingly, the subject of their attack is always the same: conventionality, conformism, hypocrisy, and commercialism. The theme, too, is always the same: the stupidity of refusing to be free in a free country. Under that theme lies the same constant value: an idealization of an older America, the America of the mid- 19<sup>th</sup> century, an America vast and formless but rich in its potentialities for a wide, casually human freedom. The individual life lived in a spirit that first of all tolerated variety and individual difference. It was the ideal America of Thoreau and of Whitman, and Lewis' novels really concern themselves with the difference between



that idealization and the actuality in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Schorer 273 - 274).

Spiller said that Sinclair Lewis was educated at Yale, in the class of 1907, he was a brilliant misfit in an orthodox university. Nevertheless, he sucked much from men and books in an environment easy for conformists, yet tolerant of cranks, wild men, and geniuses. His early years as publisher's assistant and writer showed no more promise than a gift for clever journalism. But in 1920 his *Main Street* astonished where it did not outrage, reading America. In his *Babbitt* he gave a name and a local habitation to an American type, which, despite, frantic denials, was recognized, both here and abroad, as having as much truth as satire requires. In 1925 he published *Arrow Smith*, the best, if not the first novel of science, where materialism versus idealism supplies the theme. It is also satiric, frequently unfair, but packed like the best social history, with authentic information. In 1930, having refused domestic honors, he was chosen as the first American to receive the Nobel Prize for distinction in literature. Already he was the most publicized American novelist of the decade. When he was seventeen, he worked at two newspapers in Sauk Center. He wrote two short stories - *I'm an*

*Old Newspaper Man My Self* and *You Meet Such Interesting people*. After graduation from High School of Sauk Center, he decided to go to College. His own choice was to attend the University of Minnesota but his father asked him to enroll in Yale College. In Preparation for entrance examination into Yale, he spent six months at Oberlin Academy in Ohio in 1902. Oberlin always remained in his mind as a place where smoking was forbidden and class parties were opened with a powerful prayer by some students in training as the member of the Young Men Christian Association (YMCA). He had once sufficient desire to become missionary. He recalled his father's advice that religion was a good thing for community. However, his religious enthusiasm disappeared as soon as he ended his first year at Yale (Dooley 7).

During the summer of 1905, he was home in Sauk Centre. He found it dull and dirty. This situation inspired him to begin writing a novel called the *Village Virus* which placed him already a rebel. This book, which he never finished, was prophecy of *Main Street*. In 1906, he left his college to find some experience with his friend, Allan Updegraff, to go to Hellican Hall. There he joined the group of socialist community established by Doran Sin-



clair at Engle Woods, New Jersey. Lewis' parents got the shock seeing their son leave college in his final year, and work for a radical colony under the direction of a notorious socialist. A brief stretch as Janitor ended in illness. When he recovered, he spent some months as a free lance writer and an editor in New York City. Then he left the city and registered to Yale in 1907, and he received his degree in June 1908. After that he roamed through the United States to hold various jobs and sold his short stories plots to Jake London (Dooley 11).

Spiller said that Sinclair Lewis was a rebel against the advertised ideals of the nineteenth century, whose deplorable end in the crassness he was to depict. The morals of Protestantism, the gentleman, are all implicit in his reforms. It was a decadence of spirit and hypocrisy of morals in the midst of abounding energy, which provoked him to distress and anger. The energy itself and the things, the gadgets were captured by a predatory materialism, where money and size were the only standard of success.

The town is the real subject and the triumph of *Main Street*. But his fierce idealism for America and perhaps some defects in wisdom and perspectives make *Main Street* not only a picture but also a

crusade against the cheapness of American ambitions. His men think in stereotypes. They profess the liberalism of their forefathers (as also in *Babbitt*), but practice economic domination of the poor farmers who are too dumb to live by their wits, live by gossip, and a culture is a tepid circulating of stale and harmless ideas. Yet Lewis liked them as much as his current values (1222-1228).

Foner and Garraty also stated that novelist, satirist of Middle Class values born in Sauk Center, Minnesota, the son of a stern hard working doctor, Lewis matured slowly. Writing a number of minor novels and working as a publicist and editor. In 1920 he found his voice with *Main Street* a devastating portrait of the American small town, its dullness mindless prejudices and lonely stultified women. He followed this book with *Babbitt* (1922), an equally vigorous assault on a typical small town business man and his narrow contradictory values. Lewis was more than a critic of American culture, however. In his next novel, *Arrowsmith* (1925), which he wrote in collaboration with the bacteriologist Paul de Kruif, he revealed his admiration for the heroic sick of the American dream. The novel won the Pulitzer Prize but Lewis created a literary sensation by rejecting it. Next,



Lewis returned to satiric assault with his most controversial novel, *Elmer Gantry* (1927), the story of a hypocritical evangelist. Although it created another sensation, it now seems among the weakest of Lewis' novel. In *Dodsworth* (1929) Lewis returned to his favorite subject; the American businessman - but with far more sympathy and understanding. *Dodsworth's* contrast of European and American values using international setting. Lewis' acceptance speech attacked the genteel tradition in American literature and praised such writers as Theodore Dreiser, Ernest Hemingway, and William Faulkner. In the next twenty years, Lewis continued to search for problems in American life and to dramatize them in his fiction. *It Can't Happen Here* ((1935) described the rise of fascism in the US, *Gideon Planish* (1944) exposed organized philanthropy, and *Kingsblood Royal* (1947) explore race prejudice. The best of these later novels is *Cass Timberlane*, about a thoughtful Minnesota Judge who divorces his pushy wife and marries a younger play girl. Since his death, critics have handled Lewis roughly. Some calling him the literary equivalent of George Babbitt, but others have pointed out this criticism ignores the most silent fact. Lewis' artistic reach may have exceeded his

grasp, but he had the way in urging writers to use the novel to confront America critically, without illusions (652-653).

Cayne stated that Lewis held a position connected with publishing. He, then, moved to other positions as an editor and secretary in "Red Book Magazine," "Nautilus Magazine", "San Francisco Bulletin", and as an assistant editor in "adventure Magazine" in 1912. At the same time his adventure story - *Hike and the Aeroplane* was published. A year before, in 1911, he joined the socialist party. His socialism, however, seemed to have been inspired by H.G. Wells and G.B. Shaw whom he could read (274). So Lewis is a novelist with a determined social consciousness could also use the methodology of the realistic novel to present a strongly implied social criticism (108).

*Main Street*, about the sluggish backwaters of American village life, was published in the year that officially announced American village life to have become a backwater. The 1920 census showed that at some point between 1915 and that year American society had crossed a line from what had been a rural to what had become an urban society. Sometime between those years, the old majority of farmers and villagers had become



the minority, and the residents of cities comprised the new majority (Cohen 357).

Though Sinclair Lewis had published a number of novels before it, *Main Street* was really the beginning of his popular career as it was the first statement of the pattern he was for the most part to follow in his fiction. His project from *Main Street* was to give a catalogue of Americans in a variety of circumstances, positions, and locations: the small town, the little big towns, business, science, religion, education, small business men, doctors, school teachers, club women, religious healers, hyperthyroid salesmen - in short, as Robert Cantwell has said, "the main type of middle class and lower middle class provincial society.

Lewis' success is based largely upon his great gift for parody; he was able to probe the social custom and transform it into a form of parody or fantasy of middle class life. The pattern is thoroughly documented and provided with every institutional detail necessary to make it a formal translation of life into a kind of "art". Beginning with *Dodsworth*, Lewis reformed the caricature and made another character of him. The gift of parody, while he continued to use it, was not the most conspicuous feature of his later work. It became more and more

serious, treating of somber public and domestic issues; the position Lewis gave Seneca Doane in *Babbitt* an overt and directing point of view in many of the novels. But Lewis' best achievements were in the parodies of middle class society he had given in several of his novels from *Main Street* to *Dodsworth* (Cady 478).

Since Lewis' novels and stories seem more closely tied to his personal life than to an aesthetic frame, most of the critical sources also make use of biographical details or provide short biographical accounts. His letters reveal that money and success he earned at the start of the 1920's of the success of *Main Street* were troublesome to him. He could not understand why in spite of his achievements, he had not earned the respect from other writers that he thought he deserved. He found himself in the position of being a successful author living with the suspicion that if his books were popular, they must be aesthetically defective (Beacham 718-719).

Grabstein's thesis points to the apparent split in Lewis' sensibility: half of him is satirist and realist and half romancer and year sayer. Grabstein insists that it is this very ambivalence which makes Lewis' novels interesting both as sociological documents and as literary work of art (Beacham 720).



Sinclair Lewis, Scott F. Fitzgerald, and John O'Hara can be called as the novelists of manner because they concentrate so calculatedly on manners, besides they focus on a particular social class or group of classes above the lower economic levels. They also have an affinity in tone and method with the high comedy of the stage (Chase 157-158).

Sinclair Lewis was the leading satirist of his generation. He "reported" American life, always on the outlook for a "good story"- a story of immediate topical value. What he sacrificed by this approach was philosophical depth and perspective. Yet he was a writer of high ideals and courage. Much of his criticism was leveled at an abuse badly in need of correction.

*Main Street* (1920) and *Babbitt* (1922) open his attack upon what he saw as the root of failure and corruption in our society. This was the inherent materialism that brought us, in Oscar Wilde's phrase, to know "the price of everything and the value of nothing". To own so much while possessing so little, to take comfort in our genius for inventing all sorts of satisfactions for needs that we did not have, while neglecting to recognize, let alone to satisfy, the need of human spirit.

A typical American reformer at heart, Lewis was to expose in his novels various facets of American life that were less luminous than they should be. But at the bottom he had the warmth of affection of the people and the country (in the scale of mankind). Behind the novels that Lewis was to write, most of them after the First World War; at a moment of national - scrutiny, it was almost the mission of Lewis to devote gifts as a satirist to the scourging of this world, to the scarification of American society and the purging of all that was evil in it, whether merely complacent or unlovely or definite base. With his fierce desire for a good society and his furious passion for justice, he made war upon these evils, great and small (Brooks 224-226).

Sinclair Lewis saw the United States as "the most contradictory, the most depressing, and the most stirring, of any land in the world today." His literary assault on the nation's contradictions and its grotesque vulgarities helped free its literature from the remnants of the genteel tradition of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and earned him the distinction. Lewis had a journalistic talent for recording the details of middle class American life. In his youth he had worked as a reporter for newspaper. His home



town of Sauk Center, Minnesota, the raw prairie village, population 2807, served as the model for "Gopher Prairie" in his most famous novel *Main Street* (1920). At 19 he entered Yale, there he wrote poems and short stories for the college literary magazine and helped support himself by working part time for a newspaper in New Haven. After graduating from college he got a job on an Iowa newspaper and began to study the small town people he later portrayed in his novels. He worked as a reporter and editor in New York and in San Francisco, where he met Jack London, to whom the inventive Lewis sold short story for \$ 5 each. From 1912 - 1919 Lewis published five moderately successful novels. The appearance of his sixth, *Main Street*, thrust him before the reading public as the leader of a generation of writers whose indictments of American provincialism were to change radically the nation image of itself. Throughout the 1920's, the period of his greatest successes, Lewis continued the withering satire that he had directed against the cramped and narrow life of "the American Village" in *Main Street* (McMichael 1066).

What Lewis covered about America was its potentiality for and constant expression of a wide human freedom, the individual life lived in honest

and perhaps eccentric effort (all the better), the social life lived in a spirit that first of all tolerates variety. And what he hated about America, what made him scold it, sometimes so shrilly was everything that militated against such a free life: social timidity, economic system, intellectual rigidity, theological dogma, legal repression, class convention. These two, the individual impulse to freedom and the social impulse to restrict it, provide the basis of his plots (Schores 210).

Geoffrey Moore: "Has America outgrown Lewis?" A thousand increments of commercially or altruistically motivated lessons in culture, in learning, in sophistication, have transformed the social condition in America; get hypocrisy, provincialism, prejudice, all form of materialism have only changed their clothes to mingle, as they have always done, with the crowd. New writers, Mary McCarthy, for example, are better equipped to describe these clothes. But the face is not the same face that Lewis saw. We ought to remember that Lewis' novel in order to point sarcastically at America that the attitude of mind in *Main Street*, *Babbitt*, *Arrow Smith*, and *Elmer Gantry* are not peculiar to America (Schores 218).



The most widely read and universally acclaimed American novelist of the 1920's, Sinclair Lewis, stands almost alone as the connecting link between muckraking novelists of the progressive era and social novelists of the New Deal Period. He could be harsh and almost captious in depicting the drabness of small town Mid Western life, the provincialism and smugness of the business booster, and the moral shame and materialism of his time (Link 279).

In his novels of the 1920's, Sinclair Lewis assumed every possible role with respect to the middle class. He was its critic and judge, its satirist and parodist, minister to its victims, commentator upon its many sided life, and "liberal" guardian of its political activities. *Main Street* (1920) treated the Mid Western metaphor of the small town. Morris stated that cynicism and disillusionment were also reflected in the writing of Sinclair Lewis in a revolt against small town meanness (*Main Street*, 1920) (863). With the publication of *Main Street* (1920), he achieves wide recognition. This story contrasts cosmopolitan and Middle Western small town culture (Hart 414).

Lewis's portrait is at once a skillful organization or middle detail, a series of caricatures of

Middle class types, a parody of middle class habits, forms of speech, gestures, and a fantasy world derived from the real but unreal in its actual effect. His interest is primarily anthropological; as an analyst of this half-real, half fantasy world, Lewis gives it all forms of attitude, belief, faith, and gesture (Hoffman 364). Hofstadter also said that Sinclair Lewis (1885-1951) was a Mid-Westerner whose picture of village America was neither so tender elegiac. In *Main Street* (1920), his first successful novel, Lewis painted a bleak portrait of small town America, where "dullness is made god" (325).

The notes above show how brilliant Lewis portrayed the real condition of America, especially the description of middle class societies, reflected in some of his works. He was the real parodist trying to show what has really happened and done by the middle class societies that is so typical in line with the American development from agricultural to the modern one. It really portrays American middle class' acts pervasively done by the American small town people in the early twenties. (\*)



### Chapter III

## AMERICA IN THE EARLY TWENTIES

America has changed much since the coming of industry in the country. In the 19th century, America witnessed the industrialization era. In the beginning, the textile industry had an important role. Then, steam engine was invented, paper mills were constructed, and with the establishment of iron and coal industry, America produced devices that fostered the development of the farming and arms industries. This mechanization brought remarkable progress in America Industry (Bailey and Kennedy 544-545).

Palakoff stated that cities also became the arenas for industrial growth, generating and attracting concentrations of economic power. Economic development profoundly affected American society, whether urban or rural, in the North or in the South. The consequences of economic development were most pronounced in the towns, which



were mostly in the North. Yet the process of working, selling, and consuming, which dominated urban life, was also coming to dominate the nation (263).

He further said that the nature of work changed in two respects during the first half of the nineteenth century. First, industrialization and an increasingly complex economy promoted the specialization of work processes. In the garment industry, for example, machinery combined with an infinite division of labor practically eliminated the skilled tailor, who produced an article of clothing from skilled labor who start to finish on a custom basis. The second major change stemmed from the growth of a market economy. As the economy became more commercial, work became more competitive. One had to sell one's labor or products to earn either a livelihood or a fortune, depending on the objective (264).

At the end of the nineteenth century, America was essentially caught up in the industrial position among the industrial countries of the world. By the beginning of the first decade of the twentieth century, the United States produced in value of manufactured products twice as much as Great Britain and half as much as all European countries

together. Industrialization in the United States influenced the American society almost in every aspect - politically, economically, socially, and culturally. Among those aspects, however, the most clearly seen was the economic growth. Industrialization and urbanization were, then, the outstanding new characteristics of American civilization and their effect upon the American society in all its parts, especially upon the forms of social and economic organization was tremendous enough to deserve the name of "economic revolution" (Faulkner 706).

The transformation of the American economy was accomplished in the final analysis, not by impersonal forces, but by men. The characters and methods of the new captains of industry and transportation offer, therefore, another key to understanding politics and business during America's so called Gilded Age from the 1870's to about 1893. The new economic leaders who rose to power during and after the civil war were a remarkable group sometimes ruthless and dishonest, often no worse than their fellow Americans, yet extraordinarily bold and resourceful. Like most other businessmen of their day, they convinced of economic activity as warfare, in which only the strong sur-



vived and the weak perished. It was a generally acquisitive age, and the amassing of wealth was their goal, money their standard, monopoly, subversion of representative government, and corruption of private and public morals - these were often necessary means in the fierce struggle for wealth and power.

Rockefeller was the most successful of the captains of industry, to be sure, but he was only one of many who contrived to acquire for themselves and their families large portion of the land, timber, rail roads, mineral resources and industrial wealth of the United States. The Rockfellers in oil, the Carnegies and Fricks in steel, the Morgans in banking or the Harrimans and Hills in rail road - these were the men who had a large voice in Republican party and usually the democratic party as well from 1865-1901. They financed political campaigns and received their rewards from government in the form of utilities franchises land bounties, freedom from taxation, or tariff protection.

The most significant consequence of the economic revolution was the creation of a powerful productive economy that provided inspite of its limitations an increasingly rich material life for the majority of people. Yet industrialization took place

in such a way as to create extraordinary economic and social problems for twentieth century Americans. For one thing, freedom from public control allowed businessmen to engage in ruthless economic warfare, the end result of which was often destruction of competition and establishment of monopoly. Big business by 1901 was either monopolistic or quasi-monopolistic in many basic industries while new enterprises were encountering grave difficulty in entering the field. Moreover, even before the turn of century investment bankers had begun to extend their control over railroads and industries and to build interlocking financial empires. In other words, an economic oligarchy dominated the American economy by 1900.

The period 1897-1914, generally speaking was a time of relatively stability and steady economic progress for labor. The picture of increasing and steadier employment accompanied by a substantial increase in real wages did not encourage the friends of labor. Surveying the industrial scene in 1915, the majority members of the commission on industrial relations, appointed by President Wilson to ascertain the causes industrial unrest, observed that " a large part of our industrial population are... living in a condition of actual poverty." The social



consequences of this state of affairs were ominous: children of the poor died at three times the rate of the children of the Middle classes. The problem was most acute in the textile mills and garment sweatshops where large numbers of women and children were employed (Link 57).

When Mark Twain (1835-1910), one of the greatest American writers of the age, looked around in the first years of the industrial triumph, he saw the economic oppression and moral depression beneath the triumph's glitter and he called the era the "gilded age". The gilded age was, then, the great days of the middle class, with all virtues and vices implied by the idea of materialism; an age in which materialism reigned, in which raised up an America a new ruling class; the class of the businessmen. It was the age where money making and thought of it robbed the time and the leisure of the society members in America (Current 561).

The railroad projects unexpectedly had more impact on the social life of the Americans; physical sense, but also industrialization could not be avoided. The railroads provided benefits of finding more fresh markets for manufactured goods, speeding deliveries of raw materials to factories, and also facilitating movements of many people

to and from other countries. The most effectual which had supported the rapid development of industries was the abundance of man power. Two and a half million of European immigrants arrived in the seventies and twice that number in the eighties (Garraty 295).

By 1900 immigrants were into the country at the rate of a million a year, and native born Americans viewed the newcomers as very different from themselves. Since colonial times, immigrants to America had come mainly from the British Isles, Germany, and Scandinavia. The new immigrants of 1900 came mostly from Eastern Europe, Greece, and Italy. The "old" had been mainly Protestant and farm minded; the "new" were Roman Catholic or Jewish and congregated in cities. In the past, immigrants had been, for the most part, people of low income. They had always congregated in groups determined by nationality and language, and they had always earned lower wages. But this same pattern, when followed by the new immigrants, was perceived as clannish and alien. The native Protestant middle class blamed immigrants for living in filthy, crime infested ghettos and condemned them for following machine politicians (Risjord 609).



The most striking trend in American population from 1900 to 1920 was the steadily increasing migration of people from the countryside to cities. Urban population grew nearly 80%, a rate of increase six and a half times that of the rural areas. Most Americans 88% were White in 1920. Nearly 83% of the foreign-born lived in the South or the Middle West (Link 19).

The changes that took place in America between the Civil War and the First World War were remarkable both for their completeness and for their rapidity. Institutions, system of belief, ideological and social assumptions, ways of feeling at home in the world-in short, the whole scene since the middle ages, now passed away during this fifty-year period. Confusion, resulting from feelings of personal alienation amid the loss of social stability, became more and more apparent (Martin 1)

The industrialization grew continually after the Civil War. Moreover, after the First World War or exactly after armistice on November 11, 1918, American industrialization was improved more and more to follow new requirements. Factories did not produce cannons nor guns anymore, but they produced thousands of motor cars, electric instruments, fans, and the newest product, namely

radios. Unlike other countries, America after the first World War came to its prosperity. The beginning of the twenties was the time of Americans dedicated themselves with unashamed enthusiasm to making and spending of money. The cause of the attitudes was the American's weariness of idealism and the disillusionment of the war and its aftermath. It was the time of dullness, ruthlessness, and bourgeoisie. The era was dominated by the middle class people. In this decade the Americans became very materialistic and completely dominated by the idea of commercialism. It is described that cities were bigger, building taller, roads longer, fortunes greater, automobile faster, college larger, nightclubs gayer, crime more numerous, corporation more powerful (Nevin 420-421).

Leuchtenberg says that no one doubted the American development in many sectors of life in the twenties. It was marked by the vast development in the technology of machinery, building construction, automotive and other which was characteristically physical. However, if we observe carefully, America in this age emphasized their development more on the physical building rather than the spiritual one. Thus this country, in some degree, neglected the spiritual development



of men as spiritual organism, but put more interest in the physical building. It could be noticed how much money was allocated to build soaring skyscrapers mushrooming in the business center in metropolis, factories, plants, and *transportation facilities such as* railways and highways. Compare it to the fund allocated for spiritual building such as church, which was almost unheard of. Such kind of attitudes clearly implied the behavior of the people who considered material comfort as everything and much important than the spiritual buildings (158).

He further says that the growing secularization of the country greatly weakened religious sanctions. Such kind of attitudes might make the man materially prosperous. But because they considered material comfort as everything while his own moral control was eroded due to the absence of the accountability of their attitudes in the after life, they could potentially be a homo-economicus as who might justify a means to get material comfort (158). For him the attitude idolizing riches was obvious from the people's behavior of considering Ford as a new Prophet and Detroit as a Makka of the modern world and the machine as the Messiah (186).

For the second decade of the twentieth century the nation faced a crisis in the conflict of forces within itself that had first declared themselves nineties, and creative energies were released, with their doubts as well as their confidence, into literature and criticism. The outline of that conflict had by then emerged clearly and even boldly. On the one side lay an America predominantly agrarian, concerned with domestic problems, conformity - intellectually at least - to the political, economic and moral principles inherited from the eighteenth century: an America still in the making, physically and politically, an America on the whole self confident, self-contained, and conscious of its unique character and a unique destiny. On the other side lay a modern America, predominantly urban and industrial, inextricably involved in world economy and politics, troubled with the social and economic problems that long had been thought peculiarly the burden of the old world, disparately trying to accommodate its traditional institutions and habits of thought to conditions new and in part alien (Spiller 1108).

He further says that the era of the new freedom (1913-1921) and its subsequent disenchantment was the climax of the age of reform. That



age (1890-1912) had been experimental rather than dogmatic, given to exploration rather than to the establishment sovereign claims. It was a time of protest and reform, of the rejection of what was old and championship of what was new, of speculation and experiment. There was boundless enthusiasm for good causes and endless sincerity with the political machinery. Armies of reformers advanced upon the battlements of vested interests, bands of humanitarians waged guerrilla warfare upon every form of social injustice, visionaries imagined felicitous Utopias and some even indulged in them, less felicitously. There was a youthful order to weed out abuses, democratize government, redistribute property, humanize industry, improve the cost of the working man and the farmer, rescue the victim from social injustice, elevate the moral tone of society. It was the day of the music makers and dreamers of dreams, of world seekers - though rarely of world forsakes (1108).

He further says that the attempt to reform the city government preceded the Progressive movement by some years. For a century and more, Americans had complained about their cities. Not only were they full of sin and corruption, but they were also full of anonymous, unneighborly peo-

ple, many of them new comers to the American experience, who tolerated boss rule. The "cleanup" of a city was considered such a major achievement that it frequently launched a reformer's political career. Grover Cleveland and Theodore Roosevelt each came to national attention as a result of their efforts at municipal reform, Cleveland in Buffalo in the 1880s, Roosevelt as New York City's police commissioner in the 1890s (618).

No movement could have grown so nearly universal in its appeal as progressivism had by 1912 without internal differences. Yet, most progressives shared similar goals: to change the system of plutocracy, waste, and corruption that foster deprivation, alienation, and rebellion. They hope to restore opportunities for the common man, broaden income distribution, rescue the poor, purify politics, and strengthen the state (Hofstadter 282).

Leuchtenburg says that Industry has created a powerful economy and on the surface; signs of material progress were apparent in the whole country. On the other hand, the decade also witnessed problem of labor, the decay of religion, a conflict between old and new values, and a "war" between urban and rural values (10). He further asserts that America in the Twenties was marked



by revolution in morals. This was an era after the World War I in which attitudes and values revolutionary changed. Here women began to revolt against masculine progressiveness, against over evaluation that women as love object, to beings treated at worst, as a species of poverty. The new women wanted the same freedom of movement that men had and the same economic and political rights (159).

At the same time, education was gradually developed for women. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, it was difficult for women to obtain formal and proper education. It was considered sufficient that girls learn to read and write. At the most they could go to public grammar schools and private academies when sons were needed to work on family farms and classroom were vacant. However by the end of the century, elementary and secondary schools were available for women. The consequence was that more girls than boys graduated from High School by 1890. Later on private academies, teacher training institutes and colleges were opened for women. And in the years after the civil war, women's colleges such as Vassar (1861), Wellesley (1870), Smith (1871), Bryn Maw (1885) were established (Banner 5).

The sharp change of the women attitude which claimed the equality of right to their opposite sex certainly influenced the social pattern of life. Women in this era could do anything and took place any jobs that were previously only done by men. Women flew airplanes, worked as deep-sea divers, hunted tigers in the jungle, conducted orchestra, ran baseball teams, and drilled out wells. In the political sector women could vote; they could gain seats in congress. Family control lessened. "Single women move into their own apartments, and wives - who now frequently took jobs, gains the freedom of movement and choice that went along with leaving home" (Leuchtenburg 160).

He further says that something that used to be considered indecent to talk about such as sex discussion was lifted. Women talked freely about inhibition and starvation. There appears to have been an increase in promiscuity, especially in sexual experience before marriage for middle class women; there was probably an increase in an extra marital experience as well (171).

Furthermore, Americans have given up "The work ethic" because of the luring of rich material and American society had become a "consumer society". Increasing number of Americans have mea-



sured individual worth by the goods and services they are able to consume. *More and more*, individual had come to be perceived as no more than means to get "the where-withat" for consumption. People, he further explains, are continuously tempted to spend their money. Status, worth, and success are now judged by quantity of goods and services which are consumed (Robertson 187-188). Robertson further says that advertising and aggressive salesmanship, inventions of the 1920's, become primary agents in the burgeoning of American consumption from the twenties on. Advertising men and women could "scare up" consumers and keep them buying (192).

Despite the material prosperity, the twenties also mark at the same time the beginning of a profound social and spiritual insecurity that has intensified as the century progressed. The principal developments of the "fascinating era" bring a strenuous uncertainty to many aspects of American life. To many Americans it is the beginning of a cycle of stress, a "testing period" to determine whether the long-cherished ideals of democracy, progress, and opportunity would continue as the motivating forces in American life, or whether American destinies would be controlled by some

"new uncharacteristic system" (Horton and Edward 303).

Millions of people live amid slums and misery and problems appear caused by unemployment and illness. Women and children are exploited and many American people have been deprived of a large part of their heritage of land, timber, mineral resources by railroads and the captains of industry. These are the human costs of American rapid and uncontrolled industrialization (Link and Cotton 6-7).

Allen states that American industrialization in the early decades of twentieth has created a powerful economy and brought an increasingly rich material life for American people. One of the most conspicuous results of prosperity is urbanization (146).

When the second education grows in importance, the young man sharpens his talent for moral classification. He rejects the pattern of the community - as tedious, hypocritically moral, without taste or love of beauty, life - defeating, timid and resentful. For various reasons the image of the Middle Class was appropriately identified with the Midwest as metaphor. All the criticism of the Middle Class seemed especially adaptable to



the geographical and cultural facts of the "Middle-border" provincial life. There was a gray dull tone of uniform dreariness: prohibitions and commercial greed; the towns folks were either without a spark of insight and understanding or viciously hypocritical in the conduct of their affairs; the landscape was not beautiful, the townscape was tediously uniform or hideously vulgar, the social life was timid and ludicrous. Men went to Cleveland or Chicago or Omaha for their "affair," returning to resume their moral lives (Hoffman 329).

From the discussion above it could be said that America in the industrial era experienced a lot of progresses in many sectors. This can be recognized from the products produced during that era such as the invention of radio, the mass product of automobile, the building of the roads, the rise of new business centers, and so forth. The industrial era also speed up the rise of the new cities and the changing of the rural areas to become the urban ones. Its changing also influenced the people inside. In the cities, people found a lot of progress such as the making of the women's movement, labor's movement; the need for high education both for women and for men, caring more attention to the sociology, women's pursuit of asked

the equality of rights with the men in many sectors of life etc. All of these movements were usually pioneered by the progressives. At the same time, Rural areas were also influenced by this industrialization. People in the rural areas tended to accept the modernization coming to them; for example they also enjoyed the automobile, radio, health care, movies, new factories to provide jobs and also the building of new roads. However, in general rural areas people were not influenced by modernization all of their lives. Physically they enjoyed the development in the industrial era but in line with its progress, they still hold their beliefs firmly. They were even very provincial in their lives reflected from the relationship among the villagers that tended to be easily self satisfied, hypocritical and also developed sense of chauvinism. All of these provincial mentality attitudes were not in line with the progressives' ideas so that whenever the progressives found these kinds of dullness, they obviously would react by attempting to reform or correct them. (\*)



## **Chapter IV**

# **PROVINCIAL MENTALITY ATTITUDES IN GOPHER PRAIRIE**

This chapter will discuss about the provincial mentality attitudes of the people in Gopher Prairie. Some provincial mentality attitudes shown by Gopher Prairie people are that they tend to be self-satisfied, hypocritical, and chauvinistic.

## **A. Feeling Self-Satisfied**

One who is easy to be satisfied or pleased with what he or she gets or achieves is called as one who is self-satisfied. In this case he or she tends not to do something more for the betterment. Hornby states that feeling self-satisfied is too pleased with oneself and one's own achievement (1148). This is the kind of feeling the people in Gopher Prairie perceive in many sectors of life and they indeed become very provincial. These provincial mentality attitudes of the villagers in Gopher Prairie, an American small town, are identified for the first



time when Carol comes to Gopher Prairie. People there are so proud with the existence of Gopher Prairie itself. They think that the place they are living now is better than any other places in the world. The following quotation shows about Will's opinion toward Gopher Prairie:

"Nice? Say honestly - Of course I may be prejudiced, but I've seen an awful lot of towns - one time I went to Atlantic City for the American Medical Association meeting, and I spent practically a week in New York! But I never saw a town that had such up - and - coming people as Gopher Prairie. Bresnahan - you know - the famous auto manufacturer - he comes from Gopher Prairie. Born and Brought up there! And it's 'darn pretty town. Lots of five maples and box elders, and there's two of the dandiest lakes you ever saw, right near town! And we have got seven miles of cement walks already, and building more every day!" (Lewis 19)

They are so happy with what they have reached so far. They think the development they have achieved so far is more than enough so that they do not consider about the condition of the farmer there. They think that the farmers are still happy with their condition now as they have

enough facilities in Gopher Prairie. This is clearly said by Will as follows:

"Oh, they don't mind it. Besides, things are changing. The auto, the telephone, rural free delivery; they're bringing the farmers in close touch with the town. Takes time, you know, to change a wilderness like this was fifty years ago. But already, why, they can hop into the Ford or the Overland and get in to the movies on Saturday evening quicker than you could get down to 'em by trolley in St. Paul" (Lewis, 26).

Faulkner says that America in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century was famous for its glorious rural community life and American people had always liked to talk about the wonderful life of the farmer. An American farmer had always been a simple, honest, happy man who lived close to nature and kept all the virtues. Producing on his own, holding most of the things he and his family needed, he was noncommercial. Above all, he was independent, subsisting on his own labor and not depending on the market place. This may have had some truth in the eighteenth century, but it was losing much of its reality after the economic revolution. Its reality was destroyed by the great materialism and commercialism brought together



with the industrial triumph at the end of the nineteenth century. Rapidly the farmer was ceasing to be the typical American; rather, he was giving the place to the middle class businessman, the clerk and the shopkeeper. In turn the mode of life of the typical American was inevitably changed by the existences of the small city apartment (709).

Gopher Prairie it self is said as the enlargement of all hamlets they have passed. The houses are so crowded and unprotected so that it is not appropriate for the people (o stay;

*"... And she saw that Gopher Prairi ? was merely an enlargement of all hamlets they have passing... The huddled low wooden houses broke the plains scarcely... The field swept up to it, past it. It was unprotected and unprotecting; there was no dignity in it nor any hopes of greatness. Only the tall red grain elevator and a few tinny church-steeple rose from the mass. It was a frontier camp. It was not a place to live in, not possibly, not conceivably" (Lewis 30).*

In general in its age of fifty years, the condition of the town has not been perfect yet; it is so planless and untidy. This can be observed from the condition of the business area where the buildings seem to be weak and have unpleasant color. Be-

sides, the street is filled with poles of electric lights and telephone, gasoline pumps for motor cars and by boxes of goods that are not well arranged as the people seem to compete building structures ignoring the needs of others. It is also so muddy and stinking, as stated below:

*"In the fifty years of Gopher Prairie existence...It was not only the rigid straightness which overwhelmed her. It was the planlessness, the flimsy temporaries of the building, their faded unpleasant colors. The street was cluttered with electric-light poles, telephone poles, gasoline pumps for motor cars, boxes of goods. Each man had built with the most valiant disregard of ali the others (Lewis 41).*

It is further stated:

*" Now the train was passing the elevator, the grim storage tank oil, a creamery, a lumber yard, a stock yard muddy and trampled and stinking" (Lewis 31). The houses in Gopher Prairie are tiny and flimsy there is a kind of concern that they will bend together once a strong wind sweeps the area. For Carol their houses are net too deliberated and fragile for them; they are indeed more suitable for birds: "... when the unprotected houses would crouch together in terror of storms galloping out of that wild waste. They were*



so small and weak, the little brown houses. They were shelters for sparrows, not homes for warm laughing people" (Lewis 37).

The town is really unplanned. This can be seen from the condition of the street in which the street is full of the electric poles, telephone poles, gasoline pumps for motor cars, and also boxes of goods. Besides, the position of the buildings along the street are not well planned and the colors of the building themselves are not in bright colors but unpleasant ones, as the following quotation shows:

It was the planlessness, the flimsy temporaries of the buildings, their faded unpleasant colors. The street was cluttered with electric - light poles, telephone poles, gasoline pumps for motor cars, boxes of goods. Each man had built with the most valiant disregard of all the others. Between a large new "block" of two story brick shops on one side, and the fire brick Overland garage on the other side, was a one story cottage turned into a millinery shop. The white temple of the Farmer's Bank was elbowed back by a grocery of glaring yellow brick. One store building had a patchy galvanized iron cornice; the building beside it was crowned with battlements and pyramids of brick capped with blocks of red sandstone (Lewis 41).

The people are so dirty and it seems that they do not care about their performance, as it is described below: "middle-aged man who had away of staring of women as though he had been married too long and too prosaically; an old farmer, solid, wholesome, but not clean-his face like a potato fresh from the earth. None of them had shaved for three days" (Lewis 41).

The performance of the women is very provincial so that it is common for a lady to wear a very long dress in which in Carol's mind it is not practical anymore, as stated below:

"... A lovely lady in a longer dress (but it must be an awful dress and hard to wash)...  
"(Lewis 42).

Reading is not their habit, and it seems that they do not have much time to read. They have always been busy with their business. They do not like to read as they think that reading will only waste their time. They also think that books are not well censored and time consuming. So they prefer watching the movie directly to reading, as it is easier to enjoy. They think that it is better to fill their time to have business, as Haydock, one of the business men says:



Juanita is a great hand for reading high class stuff, like "Mid the Magnolias" by this Sara Hetwigg Butts, and "Riders of Ranch Reckless ." But me , "he glanced about importantly , as one convinced that no other hero had ever been in so strange a plight, "I'm so darn busy I don't have much time to read." Clark also stated that " I never read anything..." (Lewis 54).

Raymie further says:

...to tell the truth, I don't get much time for reading, We're always so busy at the store and - But we had the dandiest professional reciter at Pythian Sisters sociable last winter" (Lewis 62).

And Mr. Wutherspoon further says:

"No, but I do love the movies. I'm a real fan. One trouble with books is that they are not so thoroughly safeguarded by intelligent censors as the movies are, and when you drop into the library and take out a book you never know what you are wasting your time on (Lewis 62).

Gopher Prairie is extremely ugly and although the people there realize about this, they never talk about its badness. It seems that the people there do not care about its ugliness. They just believe that this kind of ugliness will change itself. They only

hope that the ugliness will change without them trying to change it, as Will says below:

Of course it's ugly. Dreadfully. Though I'm probably the only person in town to whom you could safely say that. (Except perhaps Guy Pollock the lawyer -have you met him? - oh you must! - he's simply a darling - intelligence and culture and so gentle.) But I don't care so much about the ugliness. That will change (Lewis 67).

As the wife of a doctor, Carol can not have a job outside, as it is taboo for a doctor's wife to work outside. There are only three things that she could do, such as having children, starting her career of reforming the town or taking part in the town activities that are filled with church activities, study club and bridge parties, as the following quotation shows:

She could not have outside employment. To the village doctor's wife it was taboo. She was a woman with a working brain and no work. There were only three things which she could do: Have children; start her career of reforming; or become so definitely a part of the town that she would be fulfilled by the activities of church and study club and bridge parties (Lewis 86).



The Jolly Seventeen, that Carol thinks as the social cornice in Gopher Prairie, in which the members are ranged from fourteen to twenty six and most of them are young married women and considered as the middle class is not different with Thanatopsis. They seem to have unuseful activities. The activities that they usually do are only having women's afternoon-bridge once a week, once a month husbands join them for supper and evening-bridge and twice a year they have dances, as the following quotation states:

The Jolly Seventeen (The membership of which ranged from fourteen to twenty-six) was the social cornice of Gopher Prairie. It was the country club, the diplomatic set, the St. Cecilia, the Ritz oval room, the Club de Vingth. To belong to it was to be "in". Though its membership partly coincided with that of the Thanatopsis study club, The Jolly Seventeen as a separate entity guffawed at the Thanatopsis, and considered it middle-class and even "highbrow". Most of the Jolly Seventeen were young married women, with their husbands as associate members. Once a week they had a women's afternoon-bridge; once a month the husbands joined them for supper and evening-bridge; twice a year they had dances at I.O.O.F. Hall (Lewis 88).

The people in Gopher Prairie are so self satisfied and they think that they have done a lot of things. They do not realize that they have been too slow to follow the development. They are convinced that they are cultured enough but in fact it is difficult to talk with them as it is not easy for them to accept new ideas. Even if Carol insists her new ideas to them they will be easily offended, as stated below:

Carol had warned herself not to be so "beastly supercilious." She had insisted that in the belated quest of these work-stained women was an aspiration which ought to stir her tears. "But they are so self-satisfied. They think they are doing Burns of favor. They don't believe that they have a 'belated quest.' It was out of this stupor of doubt that Mrs. Dawson's summons roused her. She was in a panic. How could she speak without hurting them? (Lewis 126)

Carol finds that Gopher Prairie's city hall is large enough but it is not so well built. It is also equipped by unrelieved wall of clapboards and its windows are so dirty, as stated below:

She examined the city hall, next morning. She had remembered only as a bleak inconspicuousness. She found it a liver-colored frame coop half a block from Main



Street. The front was an unrelieved wall of clapboards and dirty windows. It had an unobstructed... It was larger than the carpenter shop. Beside it was not so well built (Lewis 128).

Carol also finds that the rest room is so bad with the window that is darkened by the torn net curtains and also by a mound of geraniums and rubber-plants, as stated below:

She went in impulsively; nodded at the matron, a plump worthy widow named Nodelquist, and at a couple of farm-women who were neckly rocking. The rest-room resembled a second hand store. It was furnished with discarded patent rockers, lop-sided reed chairs, a scratched pine table, a gritty straw mat, old steel engravings of milk-maids being morally amorous under willow trees, faded chromos of roses and fish, and a kerosene stove for warming lunches. The front window was darkened by torn curtains and by a mound of geraniums and rubber-plants. (Lewis, 133)

When the rain is coming the road of the town will be very muddy and it is difficult to pass. Main Street will be a black swamp from curb to curb; and on residence streets the grass parking beside the walks cozed gray water. It is really hot, al-

though the town is covered by barren bleak sky. The houses, squatted and scowled, appear in their unkempt harshness are softened neither by snow nor by waving boughs, as stated below:

Early May; wheat springing up in blades like grass; corn and potatoes being planted; the land humming. For two days there had been steady rain. Even in town the roads were furrowed welter of mud, hideous to view and difficult to cross. Main Street was a bleak swamp from curb to curb; on residence streets the grass parking beside the walks cozed gray water. It was prickly hot, yet the town was barren under the bleak sky. Softened neither by snow nor by waving boughs the houses squatted and scrawled, revealed in their harshness (Lewis 137).

They always say that the town has been good enough. They say that some of the people have traveled out of Gopher Prairie in many other cities in the world several times but they still find Gopher Prairie more beautiful than those cities. So that it is unnecessary for them to rebuild the town, as stated below:

"Why now, child, you've got a lot of notions. Besides, what's the matter with the town? Looks good to me. I've had people that have traveled all over the world tell me time



and again that Gopher Prairie is the prettiest place in the Middle west. Good enough for anybody. Certainly good enough for Mama and me" (Lewis 139).

They disapprove if the women there, especially in the club, get involved in politics. For them it is too taboo for women to get involved in politics as politics will bring the women to lose all of their daintiness and charm, as stated below:

"And oh, by the way, we must oppose this movement of Mrs. Potbury's to have the state clubs come but definitely in favor of woman suffrage. Women haven't any place in politics. They would lose all their daintiness and charm if they become involved in these horrid plots and log-rolling and all this awful political stuff about scandal and personalities and soon" (Lewis 142).

They think that the club has done enough things so that it is unnecessary for them to do any other social activities. They even do not want to think about their environment where they could find some unlucky people around them, as stated below:

"Mrs. Jacson Elder confirmed, "Besides, it strikes me the club is already doing enough, with three-planting and the anti-fly cam-

paign and the responsibility for the rest-room-to say nothing of the fact that we've talked of trying to get the railroad to put in a park at the station!" (Lewis 141).

Risjord asserts that Women's clubs were also another bridge from domestic to public life. The club movement began about 1890 and flourished throughout the Progressive era. The club movement was part of the search for order so characteristic of the age. The club at first focused on intellectual and spiritual uplift, but before long they became interested in community problems. They often started with charity work, moved to the investigation of wrongs, and ended by promoting corrective legislation. The general Federation of Women's Clubs campaigned for poor food and drug laws, and abolition of child labor (614).

They cannot appreciate other cultures; for example, when Carol wants to see a foreign play, they say that it is not so good and they are only played by the amateurs. They say that it is better for Carol to watch the regular play that they have:

"Well, I don't know. Be fun to take in a show, but why do you want to see those darn foreign plays, given by a lot of amateurs? Why don't you wait for a regular play, later on? There is going to be some corkers



coming: 'Lottie of Two-Gun Rancho,' and 'Cops and Crooks' - real broad-way stuff, with the New York casts. What's this junk you want to see? Hm. 'How He Lied to Her Husband.' That doesn't listen so bad. Sound racy. And, uh, well, I could go to the motor show, I suppose. I'd like to see this new Hup roadster Well-" (Lewis 205).

When Carol stays in a hotel with her husband, Kennicott, she is so surprised to see her husband's performance. She has never seen this kind of performance shown by her husband. In this case her husband's clothes look very heavy and provincial. His black shoes are so dirty and not well polished:

The moment she was in their room, with the bellboy safely out of the way, she looked critically at Kennicott. For the first time in months she really saw him. His clothes were too heavy and provincial. His decent gray suit, made by Nat Hicks of Gopher Prairie, might have been of sheet iron; it had no distinction of cut, no easy grace 'like the diplomat's Burberry. His black shoes were blunt and not well polished. His scarf was a stupid brown. He needed a shave (Lewis 207).

After some months living in G.P. Carol finds the bad construction of Gopher Prairie on the

whole. She thinks that it is a matter of universal similarity of bad construction such as the town just like the frontier camp; its building does not take the environment into account as the hill is covered by brush and the lakes are shut off by the railroads. It is also followed by the bad color and unformed of buildings. Furthermore, the place is too open that makes it become unprotected:

She had sought to be definite in analyzing the surface ugliness of the Gopher Prairies. She asserted that it is a matter of universal similarity; of flimsiness of construction, so that the towns resemble frontier camps; of neglect of natural advantages, so that the hills are covered with the brush, the lakes shut off by the railroads, and the creeks lined with dumping grounds; of depressing sobriety of color; rectangularity of buildings; and excessive breadth and straightness of the gashed streets, so that there is no escape from gales from sight of the grim sweep of land, nor any winding to coax the loiterer along, while the breadth which would majestic in an avenue of palaces makes the low shabby shops creeping down the typical Main Street the more mean by comparison (Lewis 260).



From the analysis above, it could be concluded that Gopher Prairie people are indeed self-satisfied. This can be seen from the houses that are so crowded and unprotected, people who are so dirty and do not like to read, people who find it difficult to accept other culture, the street that is so muddy and stinky in the winter, and some others. In general, with whatever they have achieved during the development of the town, Gopher Prairie people always believe that their town is the most beautiful and cultured one. This kind of feeling, in effect, makes them become very hypocritical in their daily life.

### B. Hypocritical Society

Hornby states that Hypocrisy is a practice of misinterpreting one's real character, opinions, etc. especially by pretending to be more virtuous than one really is; insincerity (612). So, it could be concluded that hypocritical society is a society who likes to behave insincerely. They tend to be more virtuous than they really are and this kind of attitude is also found in Gopher Prairie. An example of this is the fact that they do not acknowledge if Gopher Prairie is too provincial. This can be observed when Carol recently arrived; she feels that

### Provincial Mentality Attitudes in Gopher Prairie

she has been welcomed by the villagers' dirty performance. But her husband, Will Kennicott, thinks that they have been happy with their condition so that it is unnecessary for the town man to improve them, as Carol says:

"But they're so provincial. No, that is not what I mean. They're-oh, so sunk in the mud." Will: "...wake em up? What for? They're happy" (Lewis 26).

The people in Gopher Prairie are so proud of their town and the people inside so that they think that Gopher Prairie is better than any other places, as Will says: "I don't expect you to think Gopher Prairie is a paradise,...But you'll come to like it so much - life's so free and best people on earth" (Lewis 33).

In addition, they tend to show off whatever they have and they will be very glad to tell all the business they have to others, as Clarks, one of the business men, says: "Well, I am Sam Clark, dealer in hardware, sporting goods, cream separator and almost any kind of heavy junk you can think of. You can call me Sam -anyway, I am going to call you Carrie, see in' you have been and gone and married this poor fish of a bum medic that we keep around here (Lewis 32).



Carol's plain and simple performance causes the villagers doubtful whether she has the money to pay for the goods, as Ludelmeyer, the grocer, says: "... 1 bet she is Doc Kennicott's bride, good-looker, nice legs, but she wore a hell of a plain suit, no stile, I wonder will she pay cash..." (Lewis 36).

They are also so proud of the success of one of their people and for the sake of their pride they always mention this man, as one of the villagers says to Carol:

"...Did you know that Percy Bresnihan came from here? Born and brought up here?.... president of the velvet Motor Company of Boston, Mass-make the Velvet Twelve-biggest automobile factory in new England" (Lewis 46).

What they usually like to do is only for the fun of it. For this sake they will go hunting, play card, etc, as Haydock says:

" Well this is so nice to have you here. We will have some good parties -dances and everything. You will have to join the Jolly Seventeen. We play bridge and we have a supper once a month. You play, of course?" (Lewis 47).

They are described as the people who are conservative in politics but they concern themselves

very much with cars and guns, as stated below:

"They were sound and conservative in politics, but they talked about motor cars and pump-guns..." (Lewis 51).

They feel to be very important as they have given loan to farmers and for this reason they thought that they had given a lot of service to the town, as Haydock, one of the businessmen, says below:

"Parasites? Us? Where'd the fanners be without the town? Who lends them money? Who - Why, we supply them everything." Don't you find that some of the farmers think they pay too much for the services of the towns?" (Lewis 60).

Poverty will always exist everywhere. In effect, the charity is there to provide for the destitute people. They find pleasure in giving; yet, they insist that poverty is non-existent in Gopher Prairie:

"...The Bible has laid down for our guidance, 'Faith, Hope, and Charity,' it says, and, 'The poor ye have with ye always, which indicate that there never can be anything to these so-called scientific schemes for abolishing charity, never!... 1 should hate to think of a word in which we mere deprived of all the pleasure of giving. Besides, if these shift-



less folk realize they are getting charity, and not something to which they have aright, they're so much more grateful...Besides, snorted Miss Ella Stomboy, "they have been fooling you, Mrs. Kennicott. There is not any real poverty here..." (Lewis 140).

Frazier states that the closing decades of the nineteenth century present two contradictory and achieve authentic images. In the first instance, it appears to be remarkably open and fluid, filled with marvelous innovations and technological advances. Over these thirty years, America did become modern. Industrial production transformed the economic life of the nation: large-scale corporations distributed mass produced goods to national markets over an elaborate network of railroads. Americans in unprecedented numbers began to move to the cities. A restless energy drove them from the country side and the small towns to the new urban centers. At the same time, great numbers of Europeans migrated to take their chances in a new world. A sense of ambition and adventure Seemed to pervade every place and enterprise. But these decades were no less marked by constraints and restrictions, the gap between the rich and the poor widened, the distance between mansion and tenement becoming so great that only a very lucky

few could ever bridge it. The discipline of work took on a new relentlessness: the factory machine and the office routine imposed their own kind of tyranny. Thus one vacillates properly between a sense of opportunity and creativity and a sense of fixity and rigidity (62-63).

According to them, they will never find real poverty in Gopher Prairie. They also do not want to give home building- fund. In their opinion, the farmers pretend to get some difficulties to find the seeds and also machineries just because they do not want to pay the debt they have. They have their own way of asking farmers to respect the law, as stated below:

"Besides," snorted Miss Ella Stowbody, "they've been fooling you Mrs. Kennicot," There isn't nay real poverty here. Take that Mrs. Steinhof you speak of: I send her our washing whenever there is too much for our hired girl-I must have sent her ten dollars' worth the past year alone! I'm sure Papa would never approve of a city home-build- ing fund. Papa says these folks are fakers. Es- pecially all these tenant farmers that pretend they have so much trouble getting seed and machinery. Papa says they simply won't pay their debts. He says he is sure he hates to foreclose mortgages, but it is the only way to make them respect the law" (Lewis 141).



Humor is seen as the most essential thing in a person's life. For them a qualified person is a person who has a sense of humor. They do not seem to like modest people. They know that Dr. Will Kennicott has a good sense of humor so that he will surely marry a lady with a similar sense. In other words, Mrs. Kennicott is considered to have the "balance" with her husband:

- Don't you think that the most essential quality for a person to have is a sense of humor?... "Now, now, you are too modest. I'm sure we can all see that you have a perfectly corking sense of humor. Besides, Dr. Kennicott wouldn't marry a lady that didn't have. We all know how he loves his fun!" (Lewis 62)

The existence of automobile and also bridge activities bring the people to do more on sitting and driving. These kinds of activities also show the social division in the society. Moreover, they think that going out for skiing is stupid and old-fashioned:

The automobile and bridge-whist had not only made more evident the social divisions in Gopher Prairie but they had also enfeebled the love of activity. It was so rich looking to sit and drive-and so easy. Skiing and

sliding were "stupid" and "old-fashioned" (Lewis 84).

The payment for the servant is also so low, so that they are very furious to find, that Carol has paid too much for her servant. They feel hard to spend enough money for the servant, as stated below:

Juanita protested, "Don't you think it is hard on the rest of us when you pay so much?" Juanita's demand was reinforced by universal glower! (Lewis 92).

Life for them is so serious so that it is difficult for them to imagine any kind of laughter. If we want to make a kind of laughter they will think that we are too frivolous. Everything should be in correct way and if we do the reverse they will think that we have been showing off. They think that Gopher Prairie life has been the standard that is not different with the standard in any other towns, such as Chicago, as stated below:

"My lamb, they do! They don't say they are nervy. After all, Gopher Prairie standards are as reasonable to Gopher Prairie as Lake Shore Drive standards to Chicago. And there's more Gopher Prairies than there are Chicagos. Or Londons. And-FH tell you the whole story: they think you are show-



ing off when you say 'American' instead of 'Ammurrican.' They think you are too frivolous. Life's so serious to them that they can't imagine any kind of laughter ... Ethel Villets was sure you were patronizing her when-" (Lewis 96).

They ask Carol not to be too chummy to her servant. They think that Carol's friendliness to her servant is too over and in their eyes they both like cousins. Furniture that is not common in Gopher Prairie is also something strange for them. They say that Carol just wants to show off when she has Chinese house warming party. They think that by having the party Carol means to say that her husband is richer than they are, as the following quotation states:

"- Every housewife in town is doubtful about your being so chummy with your Bea. All right to kind, But they say you act as though she were your cousin. (Wait now! There is plenty more) And they think you were so eccentric in furnishing this room-they think the broad couch and that Japanese dingus are absurd" (Lewis 97).

Carol finds that they like to mock her and they think that they are superior. They never feel that they have been rude for what they have said

to someone. In this case they just want to be understood. They forget their motto that says "One man's good as another-and a darn sight better". It seems that this motto is only working for them and not for the farmer having crop failures:

Except Dave Dyer, Sam Clark, and Raymie Wutherspoon, there were no merchants of whose welcome Carol was certain: She knew that she read mockery into greetings but she could not control her suspicion, could not rise from her psychic collapse. She alternately raged and flinched at the superiority of the merchants. They did not know that they were being rude, but they meant to have it understood that they were prosperous and "not scared of no doctor's wife". They often said, "One man's good as another-and a darn sight better". This motto, however, they did not comment to farmer customers who had had crop failures (Lewis 101).

They always say that Gopher Prairie is more beautiful than any other cities. Compared with other organization, they are so sure that their organization is better as it has original ideas. Besides they always mention the name of the successful man coming from Gopher Prairie such as Percy Bresnahan, the famous auto manufacturer, as stated below:



"Oh, that's nothing. I always think that the Jolly Seventeen are so good at original ideas. If you knew these other towns, Wakamin and Joralemon and all, you'd find out and realize that G.P. is the liveliest, smallest town in the state. Did you know that Percy Bresnahan, the famous auto facturer, came from here and-Yes, I that a St. Patrick's Day party would be awfully cunning and original, and yet not too queer and freakily or anything" (Lewis 123).

There is also a ruling class in Gopher Prairie. With the existence of this ruling class, villagers should match their attitudes in line with the rules that work in Gopher Prairie, such as they cannot get drunk and fully relax, they must be correct about sex morals and inconspicuous in dress, many things must be done traditionally, and they become hypocritical. This can be seen below:

There's one thing that's the matter with Gopher Prairie, at least with the ruling class (there is a ruling class, despite all our professions of democracy). And the penalty we tribal rulers pay is that our subjects watch us every minute. We can't get wholesomely drunk and relax. We have to be so correct about sex morals, and inconspicuous clothes, and doing our commercial trickery only in the traditional ways, that none of us

can live up to it, and we become horribly hypocritical, unavoidably. The widow-robbing deacon of fiction can't help being hypocritical. The widows themselves demand it! (Lewis 155).

It seems that there is always unhealthy competition among professionals and grocers there that make the people to suspect each other, and more than that they are going to hate each other, as stated below:

Here in Gopher Prairie we've cleared the fields, and become soft, so we make ourselves unhappy artificially, at great expense and exertion: Methodist disliking Episcopalians, the man with the Hudson laughing at the man the flivver. The worst is the commercial hatred-the grocer feeling that any man who does not deal with him is robbing him. What hurts me is that it applies to lawyers and doctors (and decidedly to their wives!) as much as to grocers. The doctors-you know about that-how your husband and Westlake and Gould dislike one another!" (Lewis 156).

From the discussion above, it is clear that Gopher Prairie people are very hypocritical. This is known from their refusal to acknowledge the existence of poverty in Gopher Prairie. They see



themselves as the people who have given a lot of service to the farmer, and they are so furious when they find that Carol has given a beyond average payment to her servant. They also tend to have unhealthy competition among the professionals or businessmen. Besides, they also tend to be very chauvinistic.

### C. Chauvinistic Society

Chauvinism is the aggressive and irrational belief that one's own country is better than all others (Hornby 191). So a chauvinistic person is a person who likes to overestimate his own country better than the others in many things. They at the same time will do anything for the sake of the country's integrity or peacefulness. Gopher Prairie people, in this era is undergoing this habit and they are chauvinistic. Their feeling of chauvinism is reflected in their daily activities; for example, they do not approve of the union labor as it will be dangerous for their business. Union labor in their opinion is used by the workers not to appreciate a good job. They want to have a discussion about their business with the workers but not with the union labor or any other delegates. In their mind, they are convinced that they have their business

correctly so that they do not want to listen to others, as Elder says below:

Me? I should say not! It's like this: I don't mind dealing with my men if they think they have got any grievances - though Lord knows what's come over workmen, nowadays - don't appreciate a good job. But still, if they come to me honestly, as a man to man, I'll talk things over to them. But I am not going to have any outsider, any of these walking delegates, or whatever fancy names they call themselves now - bunch of rich grafters, living on the ignorant workmen! Not going to have any of those fellows butting in and telling me how to run my business" (Lewis 53).

In running their business they do not agree with the existence of profit sharing, pension or insurance as they think that they will make them get little profit. Besides, for them, profit sharing will only enfeeble one's independence. Furthermore, they say this idea is the idea of socialist so that they decide to go against it. They think that this kind of idea will be dangerous for the American's integrity, as Elder says:

All this profit - sharing and welfare work and insurance and old age pension is simply poppycock. Enfeeble a work - man's in-



dependence - and a waste a lot of honest profit. The half-baked thinker that isn't dry behind the ears yet, and these suffragettes and god knows what all buttinskis there are that are trying to tell a businessman how to run this business, and some of these college professors are just about as bad, the whole kit and billing of 'em are nothing in God's world but socialism in disguise! And it's my bounden duty as a producer to resist every attack on the integrity of American industry to the last ditch (Lewis 53).

The librarians cannot function well as they will not permit the children to come to the library to read. They think that children will only ruin the books they have. The number of the books that are a little are also becoming the reason for them not to let the boy to take more books out. So it seems that the task of the librarian is not to ask the children to read but only to keep the book, as the following quotation states:

"It may be all very well in cities, where they have unlimited funds, to let nasty children ruin the books and just deliberately tear them up and fresh young men take more books out than they are entitled to by the regulations, but I'm never going to permit it in this library! ... some librarians may choose

to be so wishy-washy and turn their libraries into nursing-home and kindergartens, but as long as I'm in charge, the Gopher prairie library is going to be quiet and decent, and the books well kept!" (Lewis 93)

For her reform sake, Carol always finds that all the town men have been watching on her wherever she is:

"She perceived that Vide Sherwin had told the truth. Whether she entered a store, or swept the back porch, or stood at the bay window in the living room, the village peeps at her" (Lewis 100).

Although they realize that the city hall is bad enough but they never try to make it better. On the contrary, they just wait till the government renovate it. They want the renovation of the city hall to be combined with the national guard armory because they want the young to know about military that could encourage them to be real men:

Maud Dyer granted that the city hall wasn't "so very nice," yet, as Dave said, there was no use doing anything about it till they receive an appropriation from the state and combined a new city hall with a National Guard armory. Dave had given verdict, "What these mouthly youngsters



that hangs around the pool-room need is universal military training. Make men of them" (Lewis 132).

Dancing hall is not important for them as they think that dancing is not like it used to be. It is not modest any more for them. They also do not agree with the existence of a farm bureau, although from this office, boys actually can get advantages. According to them, it is unnecessary for the boys to learn from a farming bureau, as they will be able to know farming naturally. It is just like what they experience when they are young:

And when the town grew up we thought the new city hall was real fine. And I don't see any need for dance halls. Dancing isn't what it was, anyway. We used to dance modest, and we have just as much fun as all these young folks do now with their terrible Turkey trots and hugging and all. But if they must neglect the Lord's injunction that young girls ought to modest, then I guess they manage pretty well at K.P. Hall and Odd fellows, even if some of the lodges don't always welcome a lot of these foreigners and hired help to all their dances. And I certainly don't see any need of a farm bureau of this domestic science demonstration you talk about. In my day the boys learned

to farm by honest sweating, and every gal could cook, or her ma learned her how across her knee! Besides, ain't there a county agent at Wakamin? He comes here once a fortnight, maybe. That's enough monkeying with this scientific farming-Champ says there's nothing to it anyway (Lewis 135).

They do not like cooperation of the farmers as this kind of cooperation will not give benefit for them. In addition, farmer cooperative movement is really something that they are afraid about:

"You mention the word 'co-operative' to the merchants and they'll lynch you! The one thing they fear more than mail-order houses is that farmers cooperative movements may get started." (Lewis 137).

They do not want to spend some money, they get by working hard, to build houses for poor people. They think that the poor are too lazy and never save the money they have. It is not like them who have worked hard and then saved their money so that they can be well off:

"Me? Spend all my hard-earned cash on building houses for a lot of shiftless beggars that never had the sense to save their money? Not that I've ever been mean. Mama could always have a hired girl to do that work - when we could find one. But her and I have



worked our fingers to the bone and - spend it on a lot of these rascals? (Lewis 139)

They do not like a play that will show improper morality. They think that this kind of play is irreligious and will break their generation only. In other words, they want a play that is not written by an immoral writer such as a play by Bernard Shaw. For them this kind of play does not give a good taste nor any message. For them this play is not an art anymore. In their mind a good play is a play that is clean and has sense of humor:

Then Raymie Wuther soon astoundingly spoke up:

"So have I. I read through all the plays in the public library, so to be ready for this meeting. But I don't believe you grasp the irreligious ideas in this 'And rocles,' Mrs. Kennicott I guess the feminine mine is too innocent to understand all these immoral writers. I'm sure I don't want to criticize Bernard Shaw; I understand he is very popular with the high-brows in Minneapolis; but just the same- As far as I can make out, he's downright improper! The things he says-Well, it would be a very risky thing for our young folks to see. It seems to that a play that does not leave a nice taste in the mouth and that hasn't any message is nothing but-nothing but-Well,

whatever it may be, it isn't art. So-Now I've found a play that is clean, and there's some awfully funny scenes in it, too. I laughed out loud, reading it. It's called 'His Mother's heart," and it's about a young man in college who gets in with a lot of free thinkers and boozers and everything, but in the end his mother influence-" (Lewis 213).

They always say that it is only religion that has a good influence. From religion they can manage the lower class. They also believe that through religion the lower class will able to respect property correctly. Kennicott himself agrees with theology and he also believes in Christianity although he never thinks about it, he also believes in the church although he seldom goes there. Kennicott is so surprised to know that Carol is lack of faith as he thinks that it could be bringing the bad influence to her. In other words, he believes that all good deeds must be based from religion, as stated below:

Despite Aunt Bessie's nagging the Kennicotts rarely attended church. The doctor asserted, "Sure, religion is a fine influence - got to have it to keep the lower classes in order - fact, it's the only thing that appeals to a lot of those fellows and makes them respect the rights of property. And I guess this theology is O.K.; lot of wise old coots figured it



all out, and they knew more about it than we do." He believed in the Christian religion, and never thought about it; he believed in the church, and seldom went near it; he was shocked by Carol's lack of faith, and wasn't quite sure what was the nature of the faith that she lacked (Lewis 316).

The discussion above shows how chauvinistic the people in Gopher Prairie are. This is shown from their disagreement with the union labor, farmer's cooperation, and profit sharing as they think that they will enfeeble people's independence and decrease their profit. Besides, the librarian tends to be over protective to the books by prohibiting the children to visit it freely. They also went to a National Guard armory that can be useful for the young to know about military. They do not like dancing and improper play and they always use religion as a way to manage the lower class. Knowing all of these facts, Carol tries to apply her ideas of cultural reform in Gopher Prairie.

## Chapter V

# CAROL'S IDEAS OF CULTURAL REFORM

This chapter will discuss about efforts carried out by Carol Kennicott to impose cultural reform over the villagers in Gopher Prairie. Although Carol was born in Minnesota, she was not familiar with the prairie villages. This is because since she was child she was not grown up in the prairie town but she grew up in Mankota in which she could find garden-sheltered streets. Beside she was also influenced by her father's attitudes that was learned and kind:

Though she was Minnesota-born Carol was not an intimate of the prairie villages. Her father, the smiling and shabby, the learned and teasingly kind, had come from Massachusetts, and through all her childhood he had been a judge in Mankota, which is not a prairie town, but in its garden-sheltered streets and aisles of elms is white and green New England reborn. Mankota lies



between cliffs and the Minnesota River, hard by Traverse des Sioux, where the first settlers made treaties with the Indians, and the cattle-rustlers once came galloping before her-for-leather posses (Lewis 12).

Her father is such a democratic father that will let his children to read everything. In the library in her house Carol could find many books written Balzac, Rabelais, Thoreau and also Max Muller. Here she could read many kinds of books that would enrich her thinking. He also liked to teach them the letters:

Judge Milfrod's pedagogical scheme was to let the children read whatever they pleased, and in his brown library Carol could absorb Balzac, and Rabelais, and Thoreau and Max Muller. He gravely thought them the letters on the back of the encyclopedias, and when polite visitors asked about the mental progress of the "little ones," they were horrified to hear the children earnestly repeating A-And, And-Aus, Aus-Bis, Bis-Cal, Cai-Cha (Lewis 13).

Carol's ideas after college are that she wants to make beautiful prairie towns. She feels sorry to know that there is nobody who is willing to take care of the ugly towns. At first, her idea is to become a teacher but after knowing the bad sceneries

she finds in prairie towns she changes her mind. It has been her inspiration to change the Prairie to become a beautiful town so that it will be comfortable to stay:

She sighed, "That's what I'll do after college! I'll get my hands on one of these prairie towns and make it beautiful. Be an inspiration. I suppose I'd better become a teacher then, but-I won't be that kind of a teacher. I won't drone. Why should they have the garden suburbs on Long Island? Nobody has done anything with the ugly towns here in the Northwest except hold revivals and build libraries to contain the Elsie books. I'll make them put in a green, and darling cottages and a quaint Main Street (Lewis 11).

She has been hesitant about her idea when her ambition to become a teacher comes again. But she will not be able to withstand the routine of standing in front the children and she cannot act being wise and decisive in front of them. At the same time her idea of creating a beautiful town still exists. When she finds a women club and also a picture of the Main Street in the small town, she always remembers them:

In a month Carol's ambition had clouded. Her hesitancy about becoming a teacher



had returned. She was not, she worried, strong enough to endure the routine, and she could not picture herself standing before grinning children and pretending to be wise and decisive. But the desire for the creation of a beautiful town remained. When she encountered an item about small-town women's clubs of a photograph of a straggling Main Street, she was homesick for it, she felt robbed of her work (Lewis 13).

It is the advice of her professor of English to learn about professional library-work in a Chicago school. Here she thinks a new plan. She seems to involve herself of asking children to read story books, helping young men to find mechanic books, or helping old men looking for newspaper, inviting to dinner with poets and explorers, or having a discussion with some scholars, as described here:

It was the advice of the professor of English which led her to study professional library-work in a Chicago school. Her imagination carved and colored her new plan. She saw herself persuading children to read charming fairy tales, helping young men to find books on mechanics, being ever so courteous to old men who were hun-

ting for newspapers-the light of the library, an authority on books, invited to dinners with poets and explorers, reading a paper to an association of distinguished scholars (Lewis 14).

Norton also says that the twenties were also marked by the transition in the role of the people, especially women. In the past, women stayed at home, doing domestic work, such as protecting children, home and family, weaving cloth, cleaning the house, and providing food and meals. In the nineteenth century women were exposed to physical danger on the job: as one female garment worker testified, "the machines go like and all day, because the faster you work the more money you get" (482).

Carol herself likes children but she cannot just stay at home to manage the family. One thing that she wants to do is that she has to make use of the knowledge she has gained from the college for herself and of course for other people as well. She is really a woman that cannot stay doing nothing:

"Of course. I know. I suppose that so. Honestly, I do love children. But there's lots of women that can do house work, but well, if you have got a college education, you have to use for the world... May be



I can't sing or write, but I know I can be an influence in library work. Just suppose I encouraged some boy and he became a great artist! I will! I will do it! Stewart dear, I can't settle down to nothing but dish washing!" (Lewis 15).

She likes the other librarians and she is also proud of their aspiration as well. She sometimes reads some books on anthropology, sociology, and also book about business. She also likes to take a walk and takes care of her shoes and performance well. She likes to go dancing and have suppers in some of her friends:

She was fond of the other librarians; proud of their aspirations. And by the chance of propinquity she read scores of books unnatural to her gay white littleness: volumes of anthropology with ditches of foot-notes filled with heaps of small dusty type, Parisian imagists, Hindu recipes of curry, voyages to the Solomon Isles, theosophy with modern American improvements, treaties upon success in the real-estate business. She took walks, and was sensible about shoes and diet. And never did she feel that she was living. She went dances and suppers at the house of college acquaintances (Lewis 16).

Risjord states that women were among the most devoted disciplines of the muckrakers, for it was they who subscribed to the mass circulation magazines. Much of what the muckrakers exposed, moreover, seemed to be within the female province. There were still strong taboos against the appearance of women in the public arena, whether on the stage or in the lecture hall. But by 1900 women had found a way to circumvent the restrictions. Women were the hearts of the family, they pointed out, and no one disagreed; a woman was responsible for the family unity and family integrity. It followed that any threat to the family was also within her sphere, even if it meant that she had to emerge from the home to confront it. Among the most obvious threats were liquor, impure food and drugs, child labor, and vice. Women might also expect to interest themselves in schools, libraries, utility rates, and streetcar facilities. These subjects comprised almost the entire agenda of progressive reform at the municipal level (613).

The ideas of reform of Carol are based on her high education and life experience in the town, in addition of her liking sociology. A beautiful town is always in her mind. As a Town girl, of course, Carol never sees the condition she sees in Gopher



Prairie. That is why she feels sorry to see the farmer condition there and she is inclined to help them out of their bad fate:

The hordes of the way train were not altogether new to Carol. She had seen them on trips from St. Paul to Chicago. But now that they have become her own people, to bathe and encourage and adorn, she had an acute and uncomfortable interest to them. They distressed her. They were so stolid. She had always maintained that there is no American peasantry, and she sought now to defend her faith by seeing imagination and enterprise in the young Swedish farmers, in a traveling man working over his order blanks. But the older people, Yankees as well as Norwegians, Germans, Finns, Canucks, had settled into submission to poverty. They were peasant, she groaned. Isn't there any way of waking them up? What would happen if they understood scientific agriculture?" She begged of Kennicott, her hand groping for his (Lewis 26).

In this case Carol can be called as one of the Progressives. Risjord states that the label Progressives was coming into use by 1900. It set middle class reformers apart from populists and from Mugwump liberals. The Progressives had much in

common with the Mugwumps of the 1880s. They were middle class, predominantly urban, often well educated, and committed to free enterprise capitalism. The Progressives also opposed power, but the power they feared was the tyranny of utilities, railroads, banks, and trusts. Against such enemies they saw government as a potential ally. They propose to use the government to regulate, humanize, or tear apart these new tyrants, and in so doing they gave a new definition to the term "liberal". The Progressives were activist?, out to change the world. They rejected the abstract, formal logic of "laissez faire" and its scientific concomitant, Social Darwinism. They preferred instead of the truth that comes experience and common sense. They believed not in natural laws that explained all behavior, but in changing processes that had to be constantly reinterpreted. Through the use of history and experience, Progressives thought they could understand the social processes and manage them for human benefit. Thus poverty was not a function of character, but a product of environment, lack of education, and the economic system. Through "creative intelligence," said educator John Dewey, human beings could improve their surroundings and enhance their lives (610).



What she wants is giving the villagers training soon and she thinks that the business men must be responsible for it as they get progress with their industry but they do not care of the town and the people. They just want to get the benefit without thinking about the people and their environment, as stated below:

"What's the use of giving them time unless someone has desire and training enough to plan them? Hundreds of factories trying to make attractive motor cars, but those towns- left to chance. No! That can't be true. It must have taken genius to make them so scrawny!" (Lewis 27).

To both the scattered millions who tilled the soil and millions who lived in towns and small cities, the new city-oriented culture seemed sinful, overly materialistic, and unhealthy. Yet there was no denying its fascination made even more aware of the appeal of the city by such modern improvements as radio and the automobile, farmers and town people coveted the comfort and excitement of the city life at the same time that they condemned its vices. Rural society proclaimed the superiority of its ways, as much to protect itself from temptation as to denounce urban life. One expression of this intolerance was the resurgence of religious

fundamentalism. Fundamentalism was primarily an attitude of mind, profoundly conservative, rather than a religious idea. Fundamentalist rejected the theory of evolution, indeed all knowledge about the origins of the universe and the human race that had been discovered during the nineteenth century. Urban sophisticates tended to dismiss the fundamentalists as boors and hayseed fanatics, yet the persistence of old-fashioned ideas was understandable. In rural areas where educational standards were low and culture relatively static, old ideas remained unchallenged (Garraty 722).

It is hard for her to believe how this kind of poverty can happen in Gopher Prairie. She thinks that the business men should return some of the money to the town to rebuild it. That is why she cannot accept it when the businessmen leave the town in bad condition:

"Then, if he has all that, There is no excuse whatever for this place! If these three hundred thousand went back into the town, where it belongs, they could burn up these sacks, and build a dream village, a jewel! Why do the farmers and the town-people let the Baron keep it?" (Lewis 28).



The Middle West had become a metaphor of abuse; it was on the one hand a rural metaphor, of farms, villages, and small towns; on the other, a Middle Class metaphor, of conventions, piety and hypocrisy, tastelessness and spiritual poverty. The young man or woman had to go East instead of West: in search of freedom, a 'style', culture and sophistication or moral maturity. Evidence, large and small, of the strength of the metaphor abounds in the novels and the short stories: the hero grows up on a farm, in a village, in a colorless, monotonous small town of merchants and ministers, or, at best, in a small commercial city, a provincial metropolis...he is forced to obey the tradition of the fathers; he searches for another tradition. Books, music, the arts becomes valuable sources of the new-real education; but good literature and good arts are hard to come by. There are "sympathetic souls": a school teacher perhaps, an aging or defeated musician or sculptor; an "intellectual" (often a lawyer, a doctor, a professional of some sort, rarely a minister) or a girl who is vaguely dissatisfied the choices of available for her (Hoffman 328)

In general she does not like the style of the houses and the furniture inside in Gopher prairie. She does not understand how the people can live

in this kind of situation. In her mind this kind of description only shows death and repression. She does not like it and for her they are so frightening and she wants to change them right away:

"How could people ever live with thing like this? She shuddered. She saw the furniture as a circle of elderly judges, condemning her to death by smothering. The tottering brocade chair squeaked, "Choke her-choke her-smother her." The old linen smelled of the tomb. She was alone in this house, this strange still house, among the shadows of dead thoughts and haunting repressions. "I hate it! I hate it!" She panted. She remembered that Kennicott's mother had brought these family relics from the old home in Lac-qui-Meurt. "Stop it! They are perfectly comfortable things. They're-comfortable. Beside-oh, they are horrible! We will change them right away" (Lewis 35).

She is sad knowing the real condition of Gopher Prairie. At first people say that Gopher Prairie is a beautiful town and bride will always feel happy to stay there. But now she knows the reality. People lie to her about this. But she does not want to give up. She wants to know more about the reality of Gopher Prairie on her own and not



just listening to the other people. She believes that she can handle the situation and apply her ideas, as stated below:

"I mustn't! I mustn't! I'm nervous this afternoon. Am I sick? ...Good Lord, I hope it is not that! Now! How people lie! How these stories lie! They say the bridge is always so blushing and proud and happy when she finds that out, but-I'd hate! I'd be sacred to death! Some day but -please, dear nebulous Lord, not now! Bearded sniff old men sitting and demanding that we bear children. If they had to bear them- I wish they did have to! Not now! Not till I've got hold of this job of liking the ash-pile out there!...I must shut up. I'm mildly insane. I'm going out for a walk. I'll see the town by myself. My first view of the empire I'm going to conquer!" (Lewis 36).

In Gopher Prairie she tries to offer one of her ideas about modern education using a special system that may be useful for the people:

"Tell me, Mr. Most: Have you ever tried any experiments with any of the new educational system? The modern kindergarten methods or the Gary system?" (Lewis 47).

She also proposes union labor to the owner of the corporation as she thinks it will be useful for the owner and also for the worker:

"Do you approve of union labor?" Carol inquired of Mr. Elder (Lewis 53).

Besides union labor, she also offers about profit sharing, as stated below:

"What do you think of profit sharing?" (Lewis 53).

She realizes that the farmers' number is bigger than the town businessmen. They are also simple and hard worker. But she wonders how they can live in poverty. She thinks that the town men are parasites. They really just want to get benefit from the farmers' weaknesses. She is so angry knowing that one of the riches mocks to the farmers just because they have not reached the social height of selling thread and buttons, as stated below:

"I wonder if these fanners are not bigger than we are? So simple and hard working. The town lives on them. We townies are parasites, and yet we feel superior to them. Last night I heard M'. Haydock talking about 'hicks'. Apparently he despises the farmers because they haven't reached the social heights of selling thread and buttons" (Lewis 59).

She does not agree to retain the ugliness of Gopher Prairie. For her this kind of ugliness should be ended. She cannot let it or just wait for



the change to take place. What she wants is to do it quickly. That is why she proposes to invite a good architect to come to Gopher Prairie to give lecture, as stated below:

"Splendid What shall we do? I've been wondering if it would be possible to have a good architect come here to lecture" (Lewis 67).

She prepares everything well in her first party. She does it as in the party she is going to invite the high class people of Gopher Prairie that still regard party as the only committee-meeting. She believes that by making a good preparation she hopes the party makes these men realize that holding a party or having fun is not bad, as stated below:

But she was a deliberate and joyous spender in her preparations for her first party, the housewarming. She made list on every envelope and laundry-slip in her desk. She sent order to Minneapolis "fancy grocers." She pinned patterns and sewed. She irritated when Kennicott was jocular about "these frightful big doings that are going on" She regarded the affair as an attack on Gopher Prairie's timidity in pleasure. "I'll make them lively, if nothing else. I'll make them stop regarding parties as committee meeting" (Lewis 75).

In her effort to introduce a new thing to the villagers, in a short play held in the party, she asks them to wear Chinese clothes. She also asks the them to forget for a while about their identity. She wants them to experience the new culture beside the Minnesotan's culture. Here she wants to say to them that actually it is not bad for them to know about other culture, as stated below:

"These, "Carol announced," are real Chinese masquerade costumes. I got them from an importing shop in Minneapolis. You are to put them on over your clothes, and please forget that you are Minnesotans, and turn into Mandarin and coolies and-and samurai (isn't it?), and anything else you can think of (Lewis 80).

Carol is so angry to discover that the salary of a servant is so low. She does not agree to it as she believes that a servant has already worked hard just to fulfill their own needs too. It has been hours for them to work in the houses by washing the dishes and also dirty clothes. Because of their hard work, they deserve to get adequate salary, though for Gopher Prairie people this six dollar a week is to higher for them, as stated below:

"W-why, I pay six a week," she feebly confessed,... "Carol was angry. "I don't



care! A maid has one of the hardest job on earth. She works from ten to eighteen hours a day. She has to wash flimsy dishes and dirty clothes..."But a maid does it for strangers and all she gets out of it is the pay" (Lewis 92).

It is clear that Gopher Prairie people give low wage to their servant. It shows how difficult the life of the labor at that time. As Link states that the economic revolution had created social problems of enormous magnitude cities that grew too fast, where millions of people lived amid squalor and misery; the exploitation of women and children; and a whole complex of problems caused by unemployment, illness, and perilous old age. These were the human costs of rapid and uncontrolled industrialization. A growing body of thoughtful Americans realized that continuation of such unrestrained exploitation could only result in the degradation of the masses (Link 5-6).

Carol also protests about the regulation of the library that is too tight so that it tends to prevent children to find many books to read. For her, reading is very important and it is invaluable thing. She also says that books are cheaper than minds and actually the first task of a librarian is to ask people to like reading:

"...Well, I'm sure you will agree with me in one thing: The chief task of a librarian is to get people to read... "What if some children are destructive? They learn to read. Books are cheaper than minds" (Lewis 93).

Although Carol was brought up in the environment that regard servants as the inferior class, she treats her servant Bea Sorenson differently. It is because she finds that Bea is just like other girls she has met in college. She is not different from the girls in Jolly Seventeen. Because of Carol's good treatment to Bea, they both become very cordial. For Bea, Carol is the most beautiful and accomplished lady she has ever met. She says about Carol's goodness willingly from her deep heart and not just because she want to get Carol's attention:

It was Bea Sorenson who was really her confidante. However charitable toward the lower classes she may have thought herself; Carol had been reared to assume that servants belong to a distinct and inferior species. But she discovered that Bea was extraordinarily like girls she had loved in college, and as a companion altogether superior to the young matrons of the Jolly Seventeen. Daily they became more frankly two girl playing at housework. Bea artlessly considered Carol the beautiful and



accomplished lady in the country; she was also shrieking, "My, dot's a swell hat!" or, "Ay t'ink All dhese ladies yoost die when dey see how elegant you do your hair!" But it was not the humbleness of a servant, nor a hypocrisy of a slave; it was the admiration of Freshman of Junior (Lewis 108).

She has thought hard toward what she has to do to reform the town. Then finally she takes her decision that she has to change the town. She has to awaken it, prod it, and reform it. She does not want to give up with the bad situation, many people challenge her; she faces them. For her, it is the people that should take her idea and it is not her who follows their ideas as she thinks that their ideas are negative and full of prejudices. This is described below:

She was thinking more sharply than she had for weeks. She reverted to her resolution to change the town-awaken it, prod it, "reform" it. What if they were wolves instead of lambs? They'd eat her all the sooner if she was meek to them. Fight or be eaten. It was easier to change the town completely than to conciliate it! She could not take their point of view; it was a negative thing; an intellectual squalor; a swamp of prejudices and fears. She would have to make them take hers. She was not

a Vincent de Paul, to govern and mold a people. What of that? The tiniest change in their distrust of beauty would be the beginning of the end; a seed to sprout and some day with thickening roots to crack their wall of mediocrity. If she could not, as she desired, do a great thing only and with laughter, yet she need not be content with village nothingness. She would plant one seed in the blank wall (Lewis 110).

She always wonders where she has to begin to reform the town. She has thought some choices to begin her reform ideas in which it can be started from her own house or Thanatopsis club. All of these are still in her mind:

One seed. Which seed it was did not matter. All knowledge and freedom were one. But she had delayed so long in finding that seed. Could she do something with this Thanatopsis Club? Or should she make her own house so charming that it would be an influence? She'd make Kennicott like poetry. That was it, for a beginning! She conceived so clear a picture of their bending over large fair pages by the fire (in a non-existence fireplace) that the spectral presences slipped away. Doors no longer moved; curtains were not creeping shadows but lovely dark masses in the dusk;



and when Bea came home Carol was singing at the piano which she had not touched for many days (Lewis 111).

What she wants is that the city that must be yellow glare of shop windows and restaurants, or primitive forest with hooded furs and a rifle, or a barnyard warm and steamy, noisy with hens and cattle. And she cannot understand how people can live in the environment in which their yard is full of winter ash-piles, roads are dirty with snow and mud. In her mind people should make houses better than the ones they have, as the following quotation suggests:

She ran back into the huddle of the streets, All the while protesting that she wanted a city's yellow glare of shop-windows and restaurants, or the primitive forest with hooded furs and a rifle, or a barn yard warm and steamy, noisy with hens and cattle, certainly not these dun houses, These yards choked with winter ash-piles, these roads of dirty snow and clothed frozen mud. The zest of winter was gone. Three months more, till May, the cold might drag on, with the snow ever filthier, the weakened body less resistant. She wondered why the good citizens insisted on adding the chill of prejudice, why they did not

make the houses of their spirits more warm and frivolous, like the wise chatterers of Stockholm and Moscow (Lewis 113).

For Carol, Jolly Seventeen is not a sacred organization anymore. That is why it should be criticized if it has some mistakes in their program:

"I suppose so." Her own grudges came in a flood. "I don't see why you should not criticize the Jolly Seventeen if you want to. They aren't sacred" (Lewis 117).

Carol joins Thanatopsis with the hope to be able to use it as the mean to liberalize the town. They think that Thanatopsis people are the real people. She is going to be happy to find that house wives who have been busy with their house works are still interested in poetry. Furthermore, enthusiasm for the change exist. In Carol's mind it will be meaningful to her reform ideas toward the town. This can be seen as follows:

On her way over Carol had decided to use Thanatopsis as the tool with which to liberalize the town. She had immediately conceived enormous enthusiasm; She had chanted, "These are the real people. When the housewives, who bear the burdens, are interested in poetry, it means something. I'll work with them-for them-anything!" (Lewis 124).



When in the afternoon Carol take a walk in the library she finds that the library is not attractive. For this reason, so she thinks of a better library, as can be observed below:

In the afternoon she scampered to the public library. The library was open three afternoons and four evenings a week. It was housed in an old dwelling, sufficient but unattractive. Carol caught herself picturing pleasanter reading rooms, chairs for children, an art collection, and a librarian young enough to experiment (Lewis 128).

In Carol's mind, a small American town should be lovely as well as useful. She imagines that Gopher Prairie can alter into a town that has sufficient facilities such as city hall, public library, collection of excellent prints, rest room and model kitchen for farmwives, theater, lecture room, free community ball room, farm bureau, and gymnasium, so that it would be convenient for the people to stay. It is her wish that all of these can be afforded by the Thanatopsis Club as she knows that several of their members' husbands are controllers of business and politics, as stated below:

Assured that she was not quite mad in her belief that small American town must be lovely, as well as useful in buying wheat

and selling plows, she sat brooding her thin finger playing a tattoo on her cheeks. She saw in Gopher Prairie a Georgian city hall: warm brick wall with white shutters, a fanlight, a wide hall and curving stair. She saw it the common home and inspiration not only of the town but of the country about. It should contain the court-room (she couldn't get herself to put in a jail), a public library, a collection of excellent prints, rest-room and model kitchen for farmwives, theater, lecture room, free community ball room, farm-bureau, gymnasium. Forming about it and influenced by it, as medieval villages gathered about the cattle, she saw a new Georgian town as graceful and beloved as Annapolis or that Alexandria to which Washington rode. All this the Thanatopsis Club was to accomplish with no difficulty whatever, since its several husbands were the controllers of business and politics. She was proud of herself for this practical view (Lewis 130).

Carol thinks that it is the task of the Gopher Prairie's people to provide a better rest-room for the farmer wives. The rest room they have now is not good enough as its windows are not clear so that they cannot see the life of metropolitan. She thinks that the wives of farmers should not



be thankful to The have, as providing the good rest-room must have been their duty. It is so because they have employed their husbands in their trade. So rest-room should be one of the accommodations they should get. In Carol's mind this rest-room should be good and well equipped so that it can comfort women sick of prairie kitchens. Carol herself has an idea that one day she is going to make a better rest-room-a club room, as stated below:

While she was listening to Mrs. Nodelquist's account of how many thousands of farmers' wives used the rest-room every year, and how much they "appreciated the kindness of the ladies in providing them with this lovely place, and all free," she sought, "Kindness nothing! The kind's ladies husbands get the farmers' trade. This is mere commercial accommodation. And it's horrible. It ought to be the most charming room in town, to comfort women sick of prairie kitchens. Certainly it ought to have a clear window, so that they could see the metropolitan life go by. Some day I'm going to make a better rest-room-a club-room. Why! I've already planned that as part of my Georgian town hall!" (Lewis 134).

In her efforts to have reform Carol also asks Mr. Dawson, one of the richest men in town, to contribute some of his money to be used to rebuild the whole town. She asks him to find a great architect to plan a better town, a town that is suitable to the prairie. All the architecture must be in new forms that are going to be used to change the former ones, as stated below:

"I'm not joking. I mean it! Your children in the cities are grown-up and well-to-do. You don't want to die and leave your name unknown. Why not do a big, original thing? Why not rebuilt the whole town? Get a great architect, and have him plan a town that would be suitable to the prairie. Perhaps he'd create some entirely new form of architecture. Then tear down All these shambling buildings-" (Lewis 138).

In the organization she joins, Thanatopsis, she also proposes to the other members to help the poor in the town. This is not a kind of charity but it is a chance of self-help. This can be done by making an employment bureau that can give training in direction of washing babies or making stews. Or if it is possible they can collect some funds for home building, as stated below: " Carol rose, she suggested that the Thanatopsis ought to help the



poor of the town. She was ever so correct and modern. She did not, she said, want charity for them, but a chance of self help; an employment bureau, direction in washing babies and making pleasing stews, possibly a municipal fund for home building. 'What do you think of my plans, Mrs. Warren?', She concluded" (Lewis 140).

Carol also asks the Thanatopsis' members to contribute their clothes, the old ones that are not worn, to the poor. She asks them to repair the clothes first before they give them to the poor. So Carol thinks that they have to meet again and then altogether they sew the old clothes first before being given to The poor. She thinks it will be a good idea if Thanatopsis can give the clothes on Christmas:

Carol intruded again. "Oh yes. The clothes, I was going to speak of that. Don't you think that when we give clothes to the poor, if we do give them old ones, we ought to mend them first and make them as presentable as we can? Next Christmas when the Thanatopsis makes its distribution, wouldn't it be jolly if we got together and sewed on the clothes, and trimmed hats, and made them-" (Lewis 141).

For the program of the coming year Carol thinks that it is enough for them, Thanatopsis, to get the Bible in the churches and Sunday school. She wants them not to limit themselves with either the Bible or anecdotes. For her, it is better for Thanatopsis in the coming year to study more in really stirring ideas existing at that time such as chemistry, anthropology or labor problems that are more significant:

Before the program committee adjourned they took tree minutes to decide which of the subjects suggested by the magazine *Culture Hints* Furnishings and China, or The Bible as Literature, would be better for the coming year. There was one annoying incident. Mrs. Dr. Kennicott interfered and showed off again. "Carol rose, she suggested that the Thanatopsis ought to help the poor of the town. She was ever so correct and modern. She did not, she said, want charity for them, but a chance of self help; an employment bureau, direction in washing babies and making pleasing stews, possibly a municipal fund for home building. 'What do you think of my plans, Mrs. Warren?', She concluded" (Lewis 140).

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Before the program committee adjourned they took three minutes to decide which of the subjects suggested by the magazine *Culture Hints* Furnishings and China, or The Bible as Literature, would be better for the coming year. There was one annoying incident. Mrs. Dr. Kennicott interfered and showed off again. She commented, "Don't you think that we already get enough of the Bible in our churches and Sunday Schools?"... Carol begged. Inasmuch as she did mean, it was to be extremely lucid. "But I wish, instead of limiting ourselves either to the Bible, or to anecdotes about the Brothers Adam's wigs, which *Culture Hints* seems to regard as the significant point about furniture, we could study some of the really stirring ideas that are springing up today-whether it's chemistry or anthropology or labor problems- the things that are going to mean so terribly much" (Lewis 143).

Carol cannot accept it when she is said to be the one who has been the hindrance for her husband. Thus, she has made up her mind that she is going to leave Will Kennicott caused by what Will says to her. Carol thinks that she is able to earn her living although she stays alone. She does not want to depend on Will too much. She even let Will to



divorce her if he wants to. In this case Carol does not become a wife who will follow whatever her husband wants her to do, as stated below:

She sat up with a bounce. She said coldly, "Thank you very much for revealing your real opinion of me. If that's the way you feel, if I'm such a hindrance to you, I can't stay under this roof another minute. And I'm perfectly well able to earn my own living. I will go at once, and you may get a divorce at your pleasure! What you want is a nice sweet cow of a woman who will enjoy having your dear friends talk about the weather and spit on the floor!" (Lewis 170).

Carol wishes that Will could stop saying about unimportant thing. She wishes that together with Will they could do something more useful. She does not like to know that Will feels superior to folks. She also knows that he is not as bad as she says but she also says to him that he is not as good as he says. So she really does not like it when Will feels superior but what she wants from him is that he has to take the folks as they are:

"-isn't a theater -play; it's a serious effort to have us get together on fundamentals. We've both been cranky, and said a lot of things we did not mean I wish were a cou-

ple o'bloomi' poets and just talked about roses and moonshine, but we're human. All right. Let's cut out jabbing at each other. Let's admit we both do fool things. You're not as bad as say, but you're not as good as you say-not by a long shot! What's the reason you are so superior? Why can't you take the folks as they are?" (Lewis 171).

Carol wants to refurnish Will's waiting room knowing that it is not comfortable to see. She understands that she cannot blame Kennicott for the bad waiting room as he is satisfied with the shabby chairs:

While she waited she ceased to pity and began to mock herself. For the first time she observed the waiting room....She could not blame Kennicott. He was satisfied by shabby chairs. He put up with them as his patients did. It her neglected province-she who had been going about talking of rebuilding the whole town... When the first of exhilaration of the surprise had declined she demanded, "Will! I'm going to refurnish your waiting room!" (Lewis 179).

Although Carol has failed to realize her ideas of reform caused of failing to ask some people to join her reforming the town, she does not give up easily. She thinks that she is not going to reform



the town right now but later. For the time being she is going to save her soul first:

"How? I've failed at everything: the Thanatopsis, parties, pioneers, city hall, Guy, and Vide. But-it doesn't matter! I'm not trying to 'reform the town' now. I'm not trying to organize Browning Clubs, and sit in clean white kids yearning up at lecturers with ribboney eyeglasses. I'm trying to save my soul" (Lewis 196).

Actually Carol wants fundamental changes to the town. She knows that all of the people, the industrial workers, the women, the farmers, the Negro race and the Asiatic colonies, and some of the respectable, want the same thing: to return to an age of tranquility and charming manners. They have been tired of waiting and just getting the advice that they have to wait for a better life till the next generation. Now they want a more conscious life. They are tired off drudging, sleeping and dying. They are tired of seeing that there are only a few people who can be individualists. Now they want their utopia they have already made to come true. They want to be trusted as they feel that they could be wiser than some of the individualists. They will not feel happy till they get what they want. We can observe this:

"Essentially, I think, you are like myself, Carol; you want to go back to an age of tranquility and charming manners. You want to enthrone good taste again." "Just good taste? Fastidious people? Oh-no! I believe all of us want the same thing-we're all together, the industrial workers and the women and the farmers and the Negro race and the Asiatic colonies, and even a few of the respectable. It's all the same revolt. In all the classes that have waited and taken advice. I think perhaps we want a more conscious life. We're tired of drudging and sleeping and dying. We're tired of seeing just a few people able to be individualists. We're tired of deferring hope till the next generation. We're tired of hearing the politicians and priests and cautious reformers (and the husbands!) coax us, "Be calm! Be patient Wait! We have the plans for a Utopia already made; just give us a bit more time and we'll produce it; trust us; we're wiser than you.' For ten thousand years they have said that. We want out Utopia now-and we're going to try our hands at it. All we want is-everything for all of us! For every housewives and every longshoreman and every Hindu nationalist and every teacher. We want everything. We shan't get it, So we shan't ever be content-" (Lewis 197).



When she gives birth to a baby, it seems that she is not going to be able to realize her ideas again. Moreover, when many other housewives say that she is going get over all her ideas and then settle down. But she does not want to give up the condition. She will try hard to handle the condition, as stated below:

The baby was coming. Each morning she was nauseated, chilly, bedraggled, and certain that she would never again be attractive; each twilight she was afraid... Every matron hinted, "Now that you are going to be a mother dairy, you'll get over all these ideas of yours and settle down. ..." "I could stand fight them, 'm used to that. But this being taken in being taken as a matter of course, I can't stand it-and I must stand it'" (Lewis 234)

When Carol has one son, Hugh, she has been staying in town for two years. Two years is enough for Carol to know about everything in Gopher Prairie. Carol thinks that Hugh should have everything so that she plans a better place for him. Carol herself does not consent if her son, Hugh, just stays in Gopher Prairie with its weaknesses. She thinks that Gopher Prairie is not a good place for him. She wants Hugh to stay in a better place

such as Harvard, Yale or Oxford where, of course, he can get good education that will make him become a real man, as stated below.

For two years Carol was part of the town; as much one of Our Young Mothers as Mrs. McGanum. Her opinionation seemed dead; she had no apparent desire for escape; her brooding centered on Hugh. While she wondered at the pearl texture of his ear she exulted, "I feel like an old woman, with a skin like sandpaper, beside him, and I'm glad of it! He is perfect. He shall have everything. He sha'n't always stay here in Gopher Prairie... I wonder which is really the best, Harvard or Yale or Oxford?" (Lewis 236)

Carol herself is a revolutionist. She is a radical that possesses constructive ideas. That way, she cannot accept all the badness she finds in Gopher Prairie. As a revolutionist she always wants to try to change the condition for the better:

She had such an outburst after each of Carol's campaigns-for better Thanatopsis programs, for Shavian plays, for more human schools-but she never betrayed herself, and always she was penitent. Vida was, and always would be, a reformer, a liberal. She believed that details could



excitingly be altered, but that things-in-general were comely and kind and immutable. Carol was, without understanding or accepting it, a revolutionist, a radical, and therefore possessed of 'constructive ideas,' which only the destroyer can have, since the reformer believes that all the essential constructing has already been done. After years of intimacy it was this unexpressed opposition more than the fancied loss of Kennicott's love which held Vida rritable fascinated (Lewis 248).

Carol never gives up, and she always tries to use the opportunity to reform the town whenever she has. She has a new hope when there is a new teacher comes to Gopher Prairie. She believes if this new teacher, Miss Mullins, must have a talent. Then she can ask Miss. Mullins to join her as part of her ideas to make a new dramatic club. She hopes that the three of them could be the nucleus. With others, they can perform a play again:

He was appealing, "Do you suppose it would be possible to get up another dramatic club this coming fall?" "Well, it might be worth thinking of." She came out of her several conflicting poses, and said sincerely, "There's a new teacher, Miss Mullins, who might have some talent. That

would make three of us for a nucleus. If we could scrape up half a dozen we might give a real play with a small cast. Have you had any experience? (Lewis 325)

From the discussion above, it is clear that Gopher Prairie people are still showing provincial mentality attitudes. This can be seen from their daily activities, in which they tend to be self-satisfied, hypocritical, and chauvinistic. Thus, All of these provincial mentality attitudes lead Carol to apply her ideas of cultural reform. In her efforts to reform the town, Carol always faces challenges from the villagers themselves. However, she never gives up and she will always try to find some ways to start to reform the town. (\*)



## Chapter VI

# CONCLUSION

From the analysis, it could be concluded that provincial mentality attitudes are still pervasive in the American small town in the twenties. The provincial mentality attitudes are still reflected in their daily activities in term of feeling self-satisfied, hypocritical, and chauvinistic.

Feeling **self-satisfied** can be known from the People in Gopher Prairie who are so proud with the existence of Gopher Prairie itself although actually the town is unplanned. People in Gopher Prairie are really different from the other people in the world. They have their own hair style and also their own dress. Reading is not their habit and they never have much time to read. In addition, The Woman Club, The Jolly Seventeen, seems to have unuseful activities. For them it is too taboo for women to get involved in politics. They also think that the club has done enough things so that it is unnecessary for them to do any other



social activities. There are only three things that a woman can do such as having children, starting her career of reforming the town or taking a part in the town activities that are filled with the church activities, study club and bridge parties.

People in Gopher Prairie are also very **hypocritical**. This can be known when she arrived first coming she feels that she has been welcome by the villager's dirty performance. But they always say that they have been happy with their condition so that it is unnecessary for the town man to improve them. What they usually enjoy doing is only something that can make them have fun. They also think that they have given a lot of help to fanners and for this reason they feel they have contributed a lot of service to the town. Moreover, they do not acknowledge that poverty exists in Gopher Prairie. The payment for the servant is also too low. They just want to be understood and what they think about someone is full of prejudices and absurd. Furniture that is not common in Gopher Prairie is also seen as something strange for them. They do not like to listen to others, but they just want to be listened, and to be appreciated. That's why they do not

want to have the argument. They also always say that Gopher Prairie is more beautiful than any other cities. Compared with other organization, they are convinced that their organization is better than other organizations as it has original ideas. In Gopher Prairie, there is always unhealthy competition among professionals as well as grocers. This, in effect, makes the people suspect each other or hate each other.

They are also so **chauvinistic**. For example they do not approve of union labor as it will be dangerous for their business. Besides, in running their business they do not agree with the existence of profit sharing and pension or insurance as they think that these will make them get little profit. Besides, for them, profit sharing will only enfeeble one's independence. The librarians also cannot function well as they will not permit the children to come to the library to read. They want the renovation of the city hall to be combined with the national guard armory because they want the young to know about military that will make them to be real men. Dancing hall is not important for them as they think that dancing is not like it used to be. They also do not agree with the existence of a farm bureau;



for them, farming can be learned naturally. They also do not like a play that will show about improper morality.

Carol's **ideas of cultural reform** is based on her experience when she was a child. She did not grow up in the prairie town but she was grown up in Mankota where here she could find gardens with streets surrounded by gardens with many trees. Besides, she was also influenced by her father's attitudes that was learned and kind. Her father is also a democratic father who will let his children read everything that could enrich her thinking. Carol's ideas after college is that she wants to make a beautiful prairie towns. It has been her inspiration to change the Prairie to become a beautiful town so that it will be comfortable for people to stay. She is a woman that cannot stay doing nothing. She likes the other librarians and she is also proud of their aspiration as well. She sometimes reads some books on anthropology, sociology, and also books about business. She also likes to take a walk and takes care of her shoes and performance well. She likes to go dancing and have suppers at some of her friends' places.

The ideas of cultural reform of Carol are also based on her high education and life experience in the town. Besides, she also likes sociology. In general, she does not like the style of the houses and the furniture inside Gopher Prairie. In gopher Prairie she tries to offer one of her ideas about modern education using a special system that will be useful for the people. She also proposes the owner of the corporation about union labor. She accuses the town men to be the parasites as they really just want to get benefit from the farmers' weaknesses. That is why she proposes to invite a good architect to come to rebuild Gopher Prairie. She prepares everything well in her first party. She wants them to experience the new culture beside the Minnesotan's culture. She disagrees to find that the salary of the servant is too low, so she proposes for the better salary. She also protests when children are not allowed to visit the library in which it is caused by the regulation of the library that is too tight. Besides she also proposes to renovate a better library than the one that they have.

For Carol Jolly Seventeen is not sacred organization anymore. That is why it should be criticized if it has some mistakes in their prog-



ram. Carol also joins Thanatopsis with the hope that she will be able to use it as a means to liberalize the town. She imagines that Gopher Prairie will be a town that has sufficient facilities such as city hall, public library, collection of excellent prints, rest room and model kitchen for farm wives, theater, lecture room, free community ball room, farm bureau, and gymnasium. Thus, it will be convenient for the people to stay. Most importantly, she wants that all of these can be afforded by the Thanatopsis Club. In Thanatopsis, she also proposes to the other members to help the poor in the town not in a kind of charity but a chance of self-help and also asks its members to contribute their clothes, the old ones that are not worn, to the poor. She wants Thanatopsis, in the coming year, to study more in really stirring ideas existing at that time such as chemistry, anthropology or labor problems that are more important.

Carol thinks that it is the task of the Gopher Prairie's people to provide a better rest-room for the farmer wives. Carol herself has an idea that one day she will be able to make a better rest-room-a club room. She asks the rich to contribute some of their money to be used to rebuild the whole

## Conclusion

town. She asks them to find a great architect who is able to plan a better town, a town that is suitable to the prairie. Carol wants to refurnish Will's waiting room knowing that it is not comfortable to see. Carol thinks that her son, Hugh, should have everything so that she plans a better place for him to study such as Harvard, Yale or Oxford where of course there he may get a good education.

Actually Carol wants fundamental changing to the town. She knows that all of the people, the industrial workers, the women, the farmers, the Negro race and the Asiatic colonies, and some of the respectable, want the same thing with her: to return to an age of tranquility and charming manners. They have been tired of waiting and just getting the advice that they have to wait for a better life till the next generation. Now they want a more conscious life.

But Carol finds that it is not easy to carry out all of her cultural reform ideas in Gopher Prairie. The villagers rebuff all of her ideas of cultural reform that will be applied in Gopher Prairie. But she has thought hard of what she has to do to reform the town. She does not want to give up the bad situation. Many people have cha-



llenged her, and she faces them bravely. Above all, she always thinks how and from where she could begin to reform the town. (\*)

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In line with its history, every country has defects. No matter whether it is a big or a small country, all of them have defects. It is so with the United States of America in which in the early twenties, it has also presented its defects in term provincial mentality attitudes done by its small town people. These provincial mentality attitudes are deeply rooted in their life. They even have become their culture. They are always coloring their life in many things such as in a social relation, business, and also architecture. For some people, these provincial mentality attitudes could be frustrating. But, it is not so for these American small town people, they are so happy and even proud with this culture. That's why they always talk and do it in their daily life. However, defects are defects. Defects must be corrected. And in this book, Carol, the main character of Lewis' Main Street had tried hard to reform those defects into the correct things.



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